MORAL CONCEPTS ACROSS CULTURES:

THE CASE OF SHAME

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The dissertation constitutes a multi-disciplinary, 'interperspectival' and cross-cultural approach to the study of the concept and emotion of shame. It is divided into three Parts.

In the first Part, an attempt is made to elucidate the nature of shame as it is understood in contemporary 'western' philosophy and social science. It includes an examination of the 'debate' between those thinkers who are concerned to demonstrate the 'essential universal properties' of shame, and those who maintain that all emotional experience (and thus shame) is 'socially constructed' and therefore culturally variable. In addition, the continuing discussion as to shame's significance and value in contemporary social and moral life is explored.

The second Part focuses on other-cultural 'shames'. It considers accounts of concepts apparently similar to shame given by anthropologists, psychologists and philosophers researching abroad. It also explores the views of shame in the cosmological and ontological accounts of 19th and early 20th century thinkers, including Scheler and Sartre. It thus seeks to show that ideas about shame engendered in different cultures, traditions and historical periods are themselves cultural products, and to relate those ideas to other concepts of importance in those societies.

The final Part assesses the value of the various approaches and 'debates' examined in the thesis and attempts to reach some conclusions both as to what might be the most 'promising' way to study shame and as to what topics future shame research might fruitfully investigate. It also urges greater collaboration between philosophers and researchers in other disciplines (or at least greater consideration of each others's work) in the continuing pursuit of an understanding of shame.

DEDICATION

To my children, Matthew, Liam and Melissa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the British Academy for the award of a Major State Studentship, enabling me to conduct the investigations leading to this dissertation. I am also grateful to Mr. Willie Watts Miller, my adviser at the University of Bristol, whose guidance throughout has been invaluable. It is doubtful whether I would have continued with the task of writing up the dissertation after the birth of our daughter without the encouragement of my husband Paul. Thanks are also due to my father, Norman Bruckland, and my brother, Andrew Bruckland, for their technical assistance in the production of the dissertation, and to my parents for further financial support. I am also greatly indebted to Ms Rosemary Booth, of the Student Counselling Service.

It is one of the (dubious) advantages of exploring a topic with such profound personal significance as shame, that one learns a great deal about oneself. Among my discoveries has been that shame is perhaps the most powerful factor motivating me to succeed academically. As Thrane notes:

> "Wished-for identification is commonly operative in any serious student-teacher relationship. The discrepancy between performance and real mastery provides an ongoing source of exasperation and shameful feelings. Indeed, a principal motivation of the learner's moment-to-moment efforts at mastery is surely the desire to avoid the shameful feelings of failure." (1979:148)

I would therefore like to thank Mr Clifford Wright and in particular, Dr Christian McDonaugh, of Oxford Brookes University, who supported my applications to pursue a higher degree and who have thus (unwittingly) been the major reasons for my perseverence. It is indeed the desire to fulfil the potential they believed I possessed, and to avoid the shame of failure before them, which is responsible for this thesis.

CHRISTINA REYNOLDS

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is entirely my own and was not conducted in collaboration with any other party.

The views expressed in this dissertation are those of the author and not of the University of Bristol.

CHRISTINA MARY REYNOLDS

CONTENTS

PREFACE

It is the purpose of this Preface to indicate the way in which the theme of this dissertation developed, thus hopefully providing a context in which its content may be more fully appreciated.

My previous investigations at undergraduate level focused on the general issue of relativism (primarily in anthropology), particularly as expressed in terms of both rationality and emotion (cf Reynolds 1989). In undertaking a higher degree, I was keen to develop both my interest in the cross-cultural study of emotion and the debate between 'universalists' and 'relativists'. The selection of shame as the particular emotion concept for exploration was the result of a number of things.

One of my objectives was to conduct investigations which would be of interest and relevance to both philosophers and anthropologists, and which would hopefully encourage dialogue between the two. This entailed finding a research topic especially amenable to such an interdisciplinary approach. Shame has long been a topic of interest for anthropologists, and the most recent manifestation of such interest is in psychological anthropology, represented in particular in the work of the late Michelle Rosaldo (1980;1983;1984). It was her assertion that

> "'Shames' differ as much cross-culturally as our notions of 'shame' and 'guilt.'"(1984:149)

which initially suggested the idea of taking shame as the specific example of a moral emotion concept for study. In addition, shame has in many ways been the 'poor relation' in the analysis of moral concepts in philosophy, and, as a number of philosophers had begun

to point out, the time was ripe for a renewal of attention to it. Thus, given the prevailing situation in these disciplines, coupled with the beginning of a revival of interest in shame in psychoanalytic theory, shame seemed the obvious choice.

Armed with such a concept, the next step was to determine my approach. While wanting to concentrate primarily on exploring the possibility of multiple interpretations of shame, suggested by Rosaldo's comments, the initial literature survey indicated that in addition to the question of shame's universality or otherwise, there were several other issues preoccupying its students across cultures, disciplines and philosophical 'traditions'. I felt that certain of these merited investigation, particularly where they seemed to have some bearing on the main issue. Consequently, the remit of the dissertation has enlarged, so that its main objective is to explore, in the broadest terms, what may be understood by 'shame'. The Introduction indicates the more specific issues to be investigated.

INTRODUCTION

Some twenty-five years ago, Herbert Morris commented that "The almost total lack of philosophic [sic] interest in shame is, in a word, shameful." (1971:2). Until relatively recently, the concept of shame has indeed only rarely been treated as a topic of interest and deserving consideration, not only in philosophy but also in the social sciences (with perhaps the exception of anthropology; see below). Those commentators who have turned their attention to it are united in remarking on this omission and in decrying this state of affairs (cf for example Braithwaite 1989:viii; Heller 1985:1; Lynd 1958:19; Scheff 1990a:xvi;1990b:744).[1]

This introduction will briefly consider both some possible reasons for this neglect of shame, and the way in which it has been studied in anthropology. The nature and aims of the study will then be outlined and the major and subsidiary questions which an exploration of shame must seek to address will be indicated. Finally, the structure of the study will be described.

1. THE NEGLECT OF SHAME

In philosophy, the neglect of shame is symptomatic of the broader situation whereby the study of emotions generally has been only peripheral (particularly in relation to the study of morality).

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[1]This is not to say that there have been no attempts to subject shame to philosophical analysis, as will become clear in Chapter One. However, such attempts have been only sporadic and fragmentary, so that no corpus of systematic work on shame has developed, explicitly drawing and building on previous accounts.

Perhaps the most influential reason for this has been the Kantian view of morality which has dominated much of contemporary ethical theory. Its emphasis on reason and its denial of any role for emotions in matters of moral judgement, motivation and action (because they are considered to be outside the province of the will) has been largely responsible for the lack of interest in the relationship between emotions and morality and the ethical aspects of emotions (with notable exceptions, cf Blum 1980, Oakley 1992, Williams 1973). Consequently, until the advent of cognitive theories of emotions, which recognized that these could be characterized in terms of certain beliefs and judgements which may be considered rational (cf for example Greenspan 1988; Solomon 1976), emotions were not generally regarded as being eligible for serious investigation.

However, despite the fact that there has been something of a return to philosophical consideration of emotions (cf for example Rorty 1980), of those which are usually classified as 'moral' (for reasons which will be explored in this study), it has been guilt, rather than shame, with which the majority of commentators have been preoccupied. This preoccupation itself requires explanation.[2] Thrane (1979:140-141) speculates on four possible reasons for the preferring of guilt over shame. The first is the influence of Freud. The second is the Christian obsession with guilt. The third is the frequent co-incidence of shame and guilt, which may lead to their

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[2]During the course of this study, and arising directly from a close examination of various aspects of shame, some of these possible reasons will be explored more fully, particularly in Chapters Three and Six. Thus, it is hoped that it will become clearer just how the current situation might have come about.

'entanglement' and difficulty in separating out the elements of the experience of each. Finally, he suggests that guilt, unlike shame, is often considered a more 'acceptable' emotion because while it is similarly painful, it nonetheless has connotations of strength, dignity and maturity which shame lacks (cf Broucek 1991, Lewis 1971; Scheff 1990a).

1.1 Freud

The field in which perhaps the greatest resurgence of interest in shame has taken place during the last decade is psychology, in particular psychopathology and psychoanalysis. Some of the most recent works in this field (Broucek op cit; Kaufman 1985,1989; Morrison 1989) have explored the reasons behind the implicit moratorium on shame discussion which has prevailed in the discipline since Freud. According to Broucek, the latter was responsible for creating fundamental misunderstandings (amongst both professionals and the educated public) about the nature and importance of this concept, which led directly to its neglect.[3]

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHAME RESEARCH IN ANTHROPOLOGY

In anthropology, shame enjoyed a considerably important status in the 1930s and 1940s, largely due to the work of Margaret Mead (1937) and later Ruth Benedict (1946), and their now widely known division of cultures into two categories, based on which moral emotion (guilt or shame) apparently predominated as a means of social control. The influence of Freudian psychoanalytical theory was also evident in their research.

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[3]There will be further consideration of the influence of Freud on shame research in Chapter Three.

Another major area in which shame has constituted a thriving and fruitful field of interest for anthropologists in the past is in studies of various 'Mediterranean' cultures. The dual concepts of honour and shame were evidently of overriding importance in the moral lives of the peoples under observation and were thus a recurrent theme for investigation in research conducted in this particular 'culture area' (cf e.g. Campbell 1964; Herzfeld 1980; Peristiany 1965; Pitt-Rivers 1961).

More recently, shame has been 'revisited' by researchers in psychological anthropology, who, going beyond psychoanalytical interpretations, have once again focused on this concept in attempts to articulate its meaning and significance (cf e.g. Geertz 1973; Keeler 1983; Rosaldo 1983,1984). The emphasis now is on the putative relationship between wider social factors (such as forms of social organization) and emotional experience. One theoretical perspective which informs a considerable proportion of contemporary emotion research in the social sciences is that of 'social constructionism'.

3. GENERAL NATURE AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

The present study seeks to contribute to remedying the imbalance between the philosophical consideration of guilt and shame by taking the latter, in all its aspects, as its focus. Rather than having one central, specific claim, which it is the purpose of the thesis to demonstrate, its main aim is to answer, in the broadest terms possible, the question of how we are to understand shame. An inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural exploration of this concept and emotion is the means by which the provision of such an answer is attempted.

3.1 Interdisciplinary dialogue

One of the drawbacks of much modern philosophy is that it fails to take cognizance of, for example, historical or anthropological accounts of the phenomenon under examination and it thus operates in a 'vacuum'. As noted above, one aim of this study is thus to integrate other approaches with philosophy and thereby stimulate interdisciplinary dialogue and 'cross-fertilization', in addition to achieving a more comprehensive account of the concept and emotion of shame as a consequence. In particular, the study's aim of exploring possible variations in the understanding of shame is facilitated by looking at the ways in which different disciplines interpret this concept.

Accordingly, while the thesis first critically examines, compares and contrasts accounts of shame given by contemporary philosophers, in an attempt to identify similarities and differences which may provide clues to an understanding of the concept, it then goes further, in examining views of shame reached by researchers in other disciplines (particularly in the social sciences). One purpose of this is to explore whether and how the findings of empirical research into the nature of shame reflect (or indeed undermine) the philosophical characterization of this concept.

3.2 Cross-cultural comparison

Another important aim of this study is to explore whether the understanding of shame of 'western' academics is (as is often at least implicitly claimed) an absolute, 'accurate' and universally valid characterization of shame, or whether it is in fact a

cultural product (and one which might justifiably be described as that of 'high' rather than 'popular' culture). This will be achieved by exploring the concept of 'shame' operative in other cultures or historical periods.

3.2.1. The concept of 'culture area'

Difficulties arise when attempting to determine what designates a given culture or 'culture area'. Generally, a 'culture area' is held to comprise a group of cultures, usually in close geographic proximity, which despite a greater or lesser degree of heterogeneity between those component cultures nonetheless share certain characteristics and/or preoccupations. However, this concept is a contested one, especially in anthropology.[4] Despite such disagreement, cultural parameters are essential for the purposes of comparison; therefore it is necessary to work with this concept. As such, when for example reference is made to shame in 'western' culture, this is intended to primarily denote Anglo-American culture. However, it is recognized that there may well be considerable within-cultural variation between, say, the understanding of shame adopted by academics and that of the 'lay' members of society.

It is hoped that the cross-cultural investigation into shame will constitute a specific example which may shed light on other more general questions concerning the nature of emotional and moral experience, such as the universality or cultural specificity of emotions.

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[4]For discussion of the concept of 'culture area', particularly with reference to 'the Mediterranean', cf e.g. Davis 1977; Herzfeld 1980, 1985.

4. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE STUDY

Inevitably, any project with such a general brief as that described above must identify the various aspects of the overall research field and select certain issues for more sustained and in-depth enquiry whilst indicating, but not necessarily undertaking such detailed analysis of, related subsidiary questions. In the case of shame, there are indeed a number of central recurrent themes in the literature, together with several more peripheral concerns.

4.1 Is shame universal or variable across cultures?

Of the former, one of the most significant is the (largely implicit) debate between what may be termed 'essentialists' and 'constructionists'.[5] Adherents to the first of these approaches maintain that there is indeed an essential structure to all experiences of shame, which by implication is universal.[6] Opponents of this view hold that the experience of any emotion is constituted by a complex combination of beliefs, attitudes, desires etc. which are acquired rather than innate and conditioned (to a greater or lesser extent) by culture. The implication of this view is that such experience varies in line with cultural variation.[7] This 'social constructionist' viewpoint insists on the importance of attending to the circumstances in which an emotion such as shame is felt, by whom and for what, etc., in order to fully understand it. It

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[5]This debate is but another manifestation of the opposition between universalism and relativism, framed in terms of emotional constitution and experience.

[6]Taylor (1985) represents an extreme example of the essentialist position.

[7]Rosaldo (1980,1984) represents an extreme example of the constructionist position.

maintains that it is not enough (if indeed it is even possible) just to identify any underlying structure.

One of the primary tasks of the thesis is therefore to explore these opposing claims and the general question of the universality or cultural specificity of shame. A related subsidiary task is to assess the validity of social constructionism as a theory of emotions and their relationship with concepts and contexts, and to consider other possible models of emotions which take a less extreme view than either of the above positions and which may contribute to the clarification of the main question.

4.1.1 Cross-cultural terminology, conceptual equivalence and the problem of translation

Given that it is the debate concerning the universality or cultural relativity of emotions in general and shame in particular which is the subject of exploration in the first Part of this study, the question of conceptual equivalence cannot be begged, nor the conclusions of Chapter Two pre-empted. It is therefore necessary at this point to consider and clarify the question of cross-cultural comparability.

In connection with exploring the nature of shame across cultures, one radical argument potentially raised by 'essentialists' (whose implicit or explicit claim is that 'our', i.e. 'their' [western academic] understanding of shame is the 'real' or 'right' one, and universally applicable) is that linguistic muddles are responsible for the idea that there are different 'shames'. Consequently, it may be claimed, when reference is made to such other concepts, they are being mistranslated and do not in fact refer to genuine shame - that is, as understood by our term

shame and the properly translated equivalent terms in other languages.

There is indeed an inherent problem, acknowledged by ethnographers, in any cross-cultural study, concerning the identification of the concepts chosen for analysis and comparison between various cultures.[8] Nonetheless, there are a number of counter-arguments to the 'essentialist' position identified above. Firstly, unless there is good cause to doubt it (on evidence of lunacy or some other rational deficiency), one must accept the data of anthropologists in good faith, on the assumption that they know enough about the conception of shame both to understand it in their own culture and to be able to recognize similar concepts encountered in their fieldwork abroad.[9] Secondly, the idea that the contemporary understanding of shame is the sole and correct one ignores both the

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[8]cf Mesquita and Frijda (1992:200-201), Reynolds (1989:Chapter 4 passim), on the difficulties in establishing conceptual equivalence, and the indeterminacy of translation; also Wierzbicka (1986), who proposes a neutral metalanguage for the purpose of transcending this problem. The difficulty is exacerbated both when it is necessary to rely on secondary sources, owing to an inability to read a text in the original language and the lack of an English translation, (as is the case with the work of certain Japanese scholars discussed in Chapter Four) and when an author translates a foreign concept as 'shame' without referring to the indigenous term for it nor discussing the context of its usage (cf Ng's 1981 account of Confucian Chinese 'shame', also in Chapter Four). Throughout this study, where no indigenous term for an apparently similar concept is given, the term 'shame' will be used in inverted commas to indicate that it is a provisional translation.

[9]This idea of the 'reasonable anthropologist' is but an extension of the assumption of the 'reasonable man' employed in much philosophical discourse.

fact that all concepts have anchorage in some linguistic community and the historical shift in usage of the concept of shame even in our own culture (as between its predominant interpretation in the nineteenth century as the 'sense of shame' and the current usage implying 'shame the emotion'). Such a usage is temporally shallow and as such, its extrapolation as the only valid one is unjustified.

Furthermore, the essentialists' claim (that 'our' shame concept is the 'true' one) is undermined by a view of emotion categories as overlapping rather than discrete entities. In this view, classificatory categories do not depend on their members possessing common features but are, rather, 'chains' or 'ropes' whose 'links' or 'fibres' (the members) overlap, the "definitive attribute ... changing from one link to the next" (Vygotsky 1962:64). This expresses the same principle as that outlined by Wittgenstein:

> "... these phenomena [i.e. members of a class] have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, - but they are related to one another in many different ways. ... you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. ... we ... can see how similarities crop up and disappear ... we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family resemblances' ... ... we extend our concept of [] as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres." (1953:pp31e-32e)[10]

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[10]Needham (1975) also identifies the convergence of these views with the zoological taxonomic principle of "polythetic classification" (Sokal and Sneath 1963,

Thus, such a view allows that 'foreign' concepts identified by anthropologists as sufficiently similar to shame may be assimilated into the category of shame phenomena for the purposes of cross-cultural comparison. It does not preclude the possibility of universal 'common features' but unlike the essentialist view, it does not claim that they must be present in order for members to be included in a given class.

4.2 What is the relationship between shame and the self?

A feature of many modern accounts of shame, of both essentialist and constructionist persuasion and in various disciplines, is the claim that shame and the sense of self or identity are indissolubly linked. Accordingly, there is limited consideration of the relationship between the two concepts, again as a subsidiary question to that of shame's cross-cultural universality. In particular, the claim of certain constructionists (cf Rosaldo op cit), that the concept and emotion of shame varies in line with variation in the self-concept, is examined. In addition, it is questioned whether the concept of 'self' is a valid or useful one for the purposes of cross-cultural comparison.

4.3 What is shame's contemporary significance and value?

Another question which exercises late twentieth century philosophers writing about shame is that of its moral and social significance. Since Freud, shame has been seen by many as a repressive emotion and concept and one which it would be best to try and

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Jensen 1970, cited in Averill 1980:308).

overcome. (As noted above, this view is perhaps one of the most powerful reasons why shame has received little serious attention.)

However, more recently there has been a counter-swing among some researchers, who believe that the positive benefits of a sense of shame have been overlooked (cf e.g. Ablamowicz 1984; Schneider 1977). Consequently, they have devoted themselves to demonstrating that we ignore these to our peril.

It has also been suggested that shame has ceased to be an important element in most people's experience. This view, too, has been challenged by the work of some psychologists (cf Lewis 1971) and sociologists (cf Scheff 1990a), who maintain that rather than having declined in significance or 'disappeared', although now generally devalued and therefore denied, shame is still highly influential.

This question as to the contemporary significance of shame, together with its cultural evaluation, thus constitutes a secondary concern of the thesis. However, since answering it also entails exploring possible reasons for the apparent variation in the salience and valuation of shame across cultures and historical periods, which may shed light on the question as to the universality of emotions in general, it also relates to the main question concerning shame identified in subsection 4.1 above.

5. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

At this point, it is important to discuss and explain the methods adopted in this study. Given the diversity of disciplinary approaches to shame represented, there were difficulties in selecting a

uniformly applicable methodology which could be employed throughout. Instead, an attempt was made to allow the purpose and subject matter of each Chapter to dictate the most appropriate method. Thus, for example, the aim of the first Chapter being to determine the essential characteristics of shame according to contemporary philosophers and social scientists, it was felt that the most fruitful way to proceed was to examine individual authors' accounts (in order to identify recurrent themes, points of convergence or divergence etc.) rather than begin by selecting specific issues for discussion. In particular, given the subject matter of the majority of the accounts considered, i.e. the so-called 'structure' or 'essence' of shame, it seemed particularly appropriate to emulate the phenomenological method in this way, (i.e., 'suspending preconceptions'), thus avoiding any tendency to pre-empt shame's definition.

Rather than discuss other specific methodological choices further here, the introduction to each subsequent Chapter will include a reference to the particular method adopted.

6. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Part One is concerned with the two related 'debates' about shame identified in Section 4 above. Chapters One and Two critically examine accounts of shame given by representatives of the 'essentialist' and 'constructionist' positions, to illustrate the debate, while Chapter Three considers the evaluation of shame; hence a number of different positions taken on the value and importance of shame are examined.

In Part Two, the focus shifts to other cultures. Chapter Four explores accounts of concepts apparently similar to 'shame' given by anthropologists, psychologists and philosophers researching abroad, while Chapter Five considers the place of shame in the cosmological and ontological accounts of nineteenth and early twentieth century thinkers such as Hegel, Scheler and Sartre. One of the primary purposes of this Part is to explore whether accounts of 'shame' originating in other cultures (and philosophical 'traditions', i.e. European phenomenology/ existentialism rather than Anglo-American analytic philosophy) emphasize similar aspects to those on which contemporary 'western' writers concentrate, or whether their concerns lie elsewhere.

In the final Part, an attempt at evaluation is made. Chapter Six is devoted to assessing the respective merits and deficiencies of the various debates and approaches examined in the preceding chapters. In terminology borrowed from the philosophy of science, it asks 'what is the most "promising" way to study shame?' Chapter Seven concludes the study by indicating possibilities for future research into shame. On the basis of the findings emerging from the study, it suggests topics for investigation which look likely to yield further important insights into this complex concept. Finally, it stresses the value of, and urges the practice of, collaboration between philosophers and researchers in other disciplines (or at least greater consideration of each other's work) in the continuing pursuit of an understanding of shame.

PART ONE

PRESENT PREOCCUPATIONS

SECTION A

THE NATURE OF SHAME: CONTEMPORARY 'WESTERN' PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC VIEWS

CHAPTER ONE

"PHENOMENOLOGY"[1]:THE SEARCH FOR SHAME'S 'ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE'

1. INTRODUCTION

It is the aim of this chapter to outline a broad view of what defines shame for modern thinkers. To this end, in the first part a number of accounts of shame given by contemporary philosophers will be examined, followed in the second part by those of certain psychoanalysts and social psychologists. While the main emphasis of each of these accounts may differ, what is common to them all is some attempt to elucidate the fundamental structure of shame, which, in the late 20th century, is generally understood to be primarily an emotion rather than, for example a disposition.[2]

The initial survey of these shame accounts will be largely descriptive; detailed criticism will be

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[1]My usage of this term is not intended to imply that those analyses which attempt to discover shame's 'essence' employ the methods of the phenomenological tradition. Clearly, most of them do not. However, because of their (implicit or explicit) concentration on such an essence, I see them as similar in intent to the kind of eidetic analysis propounded by Husserl and his successors, i.e.:

> "... looking for properties of [a phenomenon] ... which would be impossible to imagine as not being properties of [that phenomenon] ... these properties ... [are] 'essentially necessary' and 'essential universal' properties ... no counter-example [to such properties] could possibly be discovered." (Hammond et al 1991:77)

[2]This distinction will be considered elsewhere in this study.

made later, once a general idea of shame's putative nature has been reached.

(a) Philosophical Studies

As noted in the Introduction, philosophical attention to shame in the second half of this century has been only intermittent and relatively disjointed. However, there are substantial similarities between a number of the accounts considered below which allow them to be grouped together. Of these, the work of Rawls (1971) is taken as a starting point, both because it is chronologically the first significant treatment of shame in recent philosophy and because it contains a number of ideas about shame which are echoed in subsequent accounts, which will therefore be termed 'Rawlsian'. Once these have been examined, attention will be turned to another account which calls into question the validity of the 'Rawlsian' characterization of shame.

2. RAWLS (1971)

Although Rawls' account of shame (and guilt) is given within the context of his theory of justice, rather than being the primary focus of his inquiry, it is nonetheless considerably detailed. According to Rawls:

> "... shame is the emotion evoked by shocks to our self-respect, a special kind of good." (443)

2.1. Self-respect

It is this notion of self-respect, or self-esteem (the two are not distinguished by Rawls) which is the key one in the Rawlsian account of shame. It comprises two elements:

1) "... a person's sense of his own value"

2) "... confidence in one's ability ... to fulfil one's intentions" (440)

Beginning with the first element, one's sense of personal value or worth depends on two factors:

i) the belief that one has a "plan of life" which "is worth carrying out" (ibid);

ii) the knowledge that those with whom one associates have a good opinion of one and accord one respect (440-442).

Thus:

> "... shame implies an especially intimate connection ... with those upon whom we depend to confirm the sense of our own worth." (443)

Turning to the second element, it is essential for self-respect that one believes oneself capable of doing whatever is necessary to succeed in executing one's "plan of life".

2.2. Ideals, standards and failure to 'measure up'

Given Rawls' definition of shame indicated above, it is clear that any evidence or belief that one or more of the elements necessary for self-respect is lacking will be sufficient to cause shame. Thus, i) if one becomes disillusioned with one's life-plan and sees it as unworthwhile; ii) if one believes or perceives that one's associates do not or no longer approve of one; iii) if one discovers that one is in some way lacking in ability so that one's plan of life cannot be realized; in any or all of these circumstances, shame will occur.

All these discrepancies between what one believes 'ought to be' and what 'is', reflect a deficiency in the self, which is a further defining characteristic of shame:

> "... shame springs from a feeling of diminishment of self ... (445)

2.3. The relativity of shame objects

Clearly, individual plans of life and capacities vary widely, and given the relationship between a particular plan of life and the requisite capacities to fulfil it, it follows that the objects of shame will vary between persons. Thus, there are no absolute objects of shame:

> "... feelings of shame are relative to our aspirations, to what we try to do and with whom we wish to associate." (444)

2.4. 'Natural' shame and 'moral' shame

Rawls makes a distinction between what he calls 'natural' shame and 'moral' shame. The former arises when one's deficiency relates to acts or attributes which are necessary to fulfil one's plan of life (see above). The latter is more closely tied to what Rawls classifies as "the virtues". If one is lacking in all or any of these, one is liable to "moral shame" (444).

2.5. Resolution of shame feelings

Moving on to how the feeling of shame is overcome, it follows that being caused by awareness of failures and deficiencies, it can be removed only by subsequent evidence of success:

> "... of defects made good..." (484)

3. RICHARDS (1971)

Richards' structural account of shame follows Rawls' closely and is not substantially different except in one or two minor respects. His emphasis is

on elucidating the beliefs which are characteristically associated with various feelings, as he rejects characterizations based on other factors such as

> "behavioural manifestations", "sensations and kinesthetic feelings" etc. (250-251),

which may be common to nonetheless different emotions.

3.1. Shame and failure

As in Rawls' account,

> "In the case of shame, the defining explanation of having the feeling involves the belief of failing to attain one's conception of the self's competence, some self-ideal of excellence." (253)

and occasions for shame

> "... involve failures in the competence of the self - in the capacity to control appetites, lack of mastery in execution, lack of courage and confidence in one's ability to do things." (255).

3.2. Shame and responsibility

Richards additionally points out that shame is not restricted to those acts or attributes (which contravene one's ideal of excellence) for which one is personally responsible. It can also be felt, through a process of identification with broader groups with whom one considers one's ideals and interests are associated (254), for acts and attributes of members of such groups.

3.3. Resolution of shame

Despite his recognition of the above broader understanding of responsibility, which is related to a wider conception of the self which recognizes the connections between the individual and his/her associates, Richards nonetheless resorts to a more conventional account of the way in which shame may be

overcome. Thus, the Rawlsian characterization of shame generally embraced by Richards, i.e. that it is inherent in some belief in, or experience of, the self's failure, leads him also to conclude that only by replacing such failure with success can shame be eliminated (256).

4. O'HEAR (1976)

4.1. Shame and public opinion

According to O'Hear, the Rawlsian emphasis on shame's relationship with self-ideals is intended as a corrective to prior views[3], which insisted that crucial to shame's experience is concern that one's faults will become public; that others will thus have a less favourable view of one (77).

O'Hear sees the confusion over the role of the public, or 'audience', in shame, as deriving from the particular kinds of societies, and the values they emphasize, on which characterizations of shame by anthropologists and historians are typically based. Thus, where public esteem and one's reputation is of the utmost importance, (as, in for example, Homeric Greece, or in small, close-knit 'Mediterranean' communities), it follows that shame is necessarily bound up with concern for public opinion. However, this is not because such concern is an intrinsic element in shame, but because a good reputation is highly valued, and having a poor or diminished one is thus an <u>object</u> of shame for members of such societies (80-81).

However, in eliminating unfavourable public judgement as a necessary condition for shame, there is

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[3]Cf e.g. Campbell op cit; du Boulay 1974.

a danger of overlooking the fact that in the experience, the individual concerned takes on the role of judge of self previously accorded to others (77).

4.2. Shame and self-ideals

While O'Hear sees this shift as valuable, he nevertheless considers that in concentrating on demonstrating that shame can occur without recourse to public opinion, the Rawlsian characterization obscures the fact that it is still possible to feel shame for reasons other than those to do with personal standards. He claims that violating one's self-ideals (which, as we have seen, being relative to one's life-plan and largely self-imposed, can be arbitrary, personal and idiosyncratic) is an inadequate explanation to cover all experiences of shame (78-79). While such violation may indeed be a sufficient reason for shame to occur in certain cases, it is by no means necessary. O'Hear thus extends the definition of shame given by his predecessors to include failure "to meet basic moral demands" (79). Thus, for O'Hear, shame can also result from failing to live up to a generally accepted conception of what a decent person should be and how s/he should act.

4.3. Objects of shame

In addition, and in agreement with the earlier accounts, O'Hear acknowledges that there are myriad possible objects of shame, none of which are necessarily to do with

> "what is reprehensible or intentional in [one's] conduct" (76).

Thus again, the relativity of, and irrelevance of responsibility for, the things over which one feels shame, is noted by O'Hear.

5. THRANE (1979)

As in the preceding accounts, in Thrane's treatise on shame the central features of the concept are again taken to be ideals or standards against which performance is measured, and the associated failure or shortcoming (144). However, in addition, the intimate and intrinsic connection between shame and one's sense of self or identity is emphasized (ibid). This latter aspect of shame is explored more fully by Thrane than by any of his predecessors already considered.

5.1. Shame and identity

> "... the object of shame is paradigmatically oneself ... A man who is ashamed is ashamed of what he is." (144)

Thrane's discussion of the notion of identity is thorough. He stresses that it is erroneous to conceive of identity in terms of an atomistic, isolated individual, untouched and unaffected by historical or current circumstances and he criticizes the presentation of the self in such terms in much philosophy, particularly ethics (ibid). Such views ignore the way in which, during an individual's development, a collection of attributes is 'gathered': for example, one's nationality, parentage, education etc. All of these contribute to the constitution of one's identity, so that it is possible to feel ashamed, not just of personal, particular deficiencies, but also of those of groups, persons, institutions etc. with whom one is associated in this way. Shame for one's country, for example, is thus not irrational, but explicable, given that one's nationality is "instanced" in one (145).

Further, the process of identification plays an important role in the relationship between shame and identity. Identifications are of two kinds: firstly, there are those which have little to do with personal choice, which relate for example to the kinds of things described above. Then there are those which Thrane calls "wished-for" identifications (148); that is, with people etc. with whom one would like to be associated:

> "... shame is dependent on ... identification. ... only some identifications are freely chosen. ... the most important identifications are surely the infantile and unconscious ones." (145)
>
> "On the one hand, there is my identification with those I see as my like. Such identification is not necessarily chosen; it may well be thrust upon me. On the other hand, there is ... 'wished-for' identification." (148)

Thus, for example, a PhD student may aspire to be a member of the academic community. Failure to produce work of a sufficiently scholarly standard will, then, induce shame; shame that s/he does not merit the description of 'academic'.

By his analysis of identity, Thrane can be distinguished from Rawls, who not only does not explicitly discuss the notion, but rather, implicitly marries the sense of identity to ideas about aims, ideals and the way one conducts one's life.[4]

5.2. Shame and ideals

As noted earlier, on somewhat more Rawlsian lines is Thrane's discussion of

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[4]This point is brought out by Deigh (1983) whose account is considered below.

> "failure to achieve or possess the (admired) ideal" (144)

as the cause of shame feeling. Again, the idea that such ideals are or must be <u>personal</u> is accepted by Thrane. By this is not meant, however, that they must of necessity be particular to an individual, only that they must be "embraced" before failure to live up to them can be instrumental in bringing about shame. Thus, Thrane's view is not significantly different from O'Hear's.

Moreover, since there are varying <u>degrees</u> of failure or shortcoming with respect to an ideal or standard, there are also varying degrees of shame (ibid). However, it does not follow that the greater the failure, the greater the shame:

> "A small thing may provoke intense shame" (143).

The intensity of the shame experience is thus not in direct proportion to the level of deficiency.

5.3 Shame and responsibility

The question of responsibility is again raised in Thrane's account. As we have already seen in the discussion of identity, it is identification which plays the most influential role in determining whether one will feel shame. Such identifications need not be made freely or consciously, both of which would appear to be prerequisites for attributions of responsibility to be justified.

5.4 Shame and 'the other',

The role of 'the public', or 'the other', in shame is also, according to Thrane, not unproblematic.

Again, one must identify with the public attempting to shame one if its efforts are to succeed. Just as

> "... with regard to unembraced ideals one will be shameless" (144),

so too with respect to a judging party whose standards one does not share, will one be shameless. Rather, the intended shaming may induce quite different emotions in the object of its efforts, such as anger or contempt, or even mere indifference (147).

However, there is one way in which 'the public' does represent an important element in the experience of shame. This is in its role as exemplifying an <u>objective</u> perspective on one's self. To feel shame, one must be able to look at one's character, actions, etc. from the point of view of an outsider. It is only when one recognizes that there is a discrepancy between one's own view of oneself and that of others that shame can occur:

> "When we feel shame, we (at least imagine that we) see ourselves as others see us." (153)

5.5. Resolution of shame feelings

Finally, with respect to the resolution of shame feelings, Thrane concurs with his predecessors: failure must be replaced by success. Or, one must adjust one's standards so that one will not judge oneself so severely in future (144).

6. BOONIN (1983)

6.1. Shame, guilt, norms and values

Boonin's central thesis is that, contrary to what is commonly argued, shame is <u>not</u> essentially social in nature (295). Rather, it is guilt which has this characteristic. The explanation for this lies in the relationships between the two concepts and norms and values. Norms, being socially-prescribed rules or standards indicating proper conduct, are restricted to actions, whereas values can also include

> "states of character and states of affairs." (299).

<u>Guilt</u> arises when the former are transgressed; both the way in which it is incurred and the means by which it is eliminated are socially determined (ibid). Shame, however,

> "relates to failures as seen in terms of the individual's own self-estimation" (ibid),

i.e., in terms of the particular values and ideals held by persons (which may or may not be shared by others in society); hence the more private and 'internal' nature ascribed to shame by Boonin.

<u>6.2. Shame, ideals and failure</u>

Boonin is in agreement with his predecessors on the fundamental relationship between shame and

> "failures, imperfections, inadequacies and weaknesses." (296);

specifically failure

> "to measure up to a valid and binding ideal." (ibid).

Irrespective of whether such ideals are personally or socially relative (as noted earlier), or universal (in the sense of

> "an objectively valid conception of the nature and function of man" [297, cf O'Hear op cit:79]),

shame results from failure to conform to those ideals (Boonin op cit:297).

6.3. Shame and self/identity

The thematic that in experiences of shame it is one's self which is negatively judged or valued by oneself is continued in Boonin's work (although what that sense of self is, and from where it is derived, are not explored):

> "... shame focuses directly on one's identity..." (301)
>
> "... shame ... relates to one's own negative self-evaluation of one's own being and existence." (302)
>
> "In shame one has essentially only failed one's self - one's innermost valuation of one's own being ..." (299)

Again comparing shame to guilt (which, as noted above, relates to acts), in the latter's case, the focus is primarily on the act which occasions the guilt and only secondarily on the actor, as agent of the deed. By contrast, in shame, (in those cases when it does arise from an act), it is

> "what the act reveals about the actor and his basic character" (300)

which is the focus of attention.

6.4. Shame and responsibility

The question as to whether shame can (and should) be felt for things over which one has no control is also raised by Boonin. Following from his discussion of the respective relations between guilt and shame and norms and values, he too concludes that questions of responsibility are irrelevant in shame. Values (and thus shame) not being essentially connected with acts, it is impossible to attribute blame for failures or shortcomings which are the source of shame. In particular:

> "... we do not seem able to exercise any clear or conscious control over our ideal conception of ourselves, and as we are continually falling short of our ideals and frequently exhibiting personal inadequacies, we cannot in retrospect see as clearly what we could have done to avoid them." (ibid)

6.5. Resolution of shame

Unlike guilt, for which (due to its intrinsically social nature) there are clearly prescribed ways of making reparation, there are no institutionalized means by which shame may be overcome. Transformation of the self (by means of revising one's values, improving one's performance, etc.) is, again, acknowledged as the sole 'antidote' to shame, for which there is rarely (if ever) immediate relief (299, 300-301).

7. LAMB (1983)

7.1. Shame and responsibility

The key element of shame which is scrutinized by Lamb is its relationship to responsibility.[5] As comparison of the preceding accounts shows, there is a general consensus that ideas about personal responsibility have no relevance to the experience of shame. In addition, Lamb points out that one can be put into a "state of shame" by something done by another (332) and that

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[5]His motive for doing so is to demonstrate that shame and shame feelings, in contrast to guilt and guilt feelings, cannot "provide a basis for morality" (345) - when morality is understood as having to do with rules, acts and responsibility. Lamb's arguments concerning the relationship (if any) between shame and morality, together with the question as to whether his conception of morality is adequate, will be discussed more fully in Chapter Three below.

"shame can 'attach' to a person without that person's being aware of his state in that respect." (339)[6]

7.2. Guilt, shame, norms and values

Lamb agrees with Boonin that

"... in pursuing the distinction between guilt and shame, we are led to pursue the distinction between rules and ideals." (337).

Again,

"Rules govern ... what we do. Ideals govern ... what we are." (338)

Whilst it is intelligible to talk about being responsible for what we do, it is not usually the case that we ascribe responsibility to ourselves for what we are. Thus, again, the lack of connection between shame and responsibility is argued by Lamb.

8. TAYLOR (1985)

Taylor's account of shame, although extremely 'Rawlsian' in nature (as will be seen below) might nonetheless also be construed as a critique of previous philosophical accounts. This is because (echoing Richards op cit, but taking his approach further) it concentrates on identifying a universal belief-structure underlying the emotion, in an attempt to eliminate the variable aspects of shame and in particular, to refute the view that there are different 'kinds' of shame (e.g. Rawls' 'moral' and 'natural' shame). It is thus perhaps the paradigmatic

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[6] However, in these latter cases, it is not shame as an emotion which is being considered. Nonetheless, so far as shame the emotion is concerned, it is still the case that in order to feel it, one need not believe that one is responsible for whatever it is of which one is ashamed.

example of what have been classified as 'phenomenological' approaches.

8.1. Shame and beliefs

For Taylor, shame is indeed characterized by a particular and invariant set of beliefs; her account is thus in addition a paradigmatic example of a cognitive approach to the study of emotions.[7]

According to Taylor, there are two aspects to the beliefs typically associated with shame. Firstly, giving rise to the emotion, there is a "self-directed adverse judgement" (64) of oneself, a belief that one is a different and most importantly lesser person than one "believed, assumed or hoped" was the case (ibid). Secondly, there is the idea that one either
(a) actually is seen, or (b) could be seen, in some way which differs from the way one believed one was seen, or ought to be seen (cf Thrane, op cit). This awareness of a discrepancy between an actual or potential objective view and the actual or desired subjective view, is what gives rise to the critical self-judgement which causes shame.

8.2. Shame and the "audience" or observer

The greater part of Taylor's discussion of shame focuses on analyzing the significance which the notion of an audience or observer has in the experience. The issue is to determine the necessity or otherwise of an

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[7]While she concedes that such an account is not necessarily exhaustive, it is clear that she regards her approach as the key to reaching the most accurate (and possibly the most important) characterization of shame - consideration of its other more "superficial" (54) elements serving only to cloud and confuse the ability to understand its essential nature.

actual other as observer, as against the sufficiency of just oneself taking an observer's perspective on oneself.

The role of public opinion in cases of shame has been investigated in certain of the accounts already considered. In particular, Taylor's discussion appears to owe much to that of O'Hear (op cit), as will become clear. However, it is features of the Sartrean description of shame with which she most takes issue. Sartre's ontological view of shame will be explored fully in Chapter Five and cannot be pre-empted by outlining it here; a brief indication of his conception of a person experiencing shame is, though, essential.

A man (unwittingly) makes a vulgar gesture. He then realizes he is being watched and that the person watching him considers his gesture vulgar. Becoming aware that he is, thus, capable of appearing vulgar, he feels shame (Sartre 1956:221).

8.2.1. Taylor on Sartre on shame

> "... shame is not originally a phenomenon of reflection ... it is in its primary structure shame before somebody ...
>
> ... the Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me. I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other." (Sartre 1956:221-222).

> "By the mere appearance of the Other, I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the other ... shame is by nature recognition. I recognize that I am as the Other sees me." (ibid)

There are two views expressed in the above passages with which Taylor disagrees. Firstly, that

for shame to be felt, it is essential that there be 'another' involved (what this 'other' is, is also in dispute). Secondly, that in shame, the shame-feeler identifies or concurs with the description of themselves (or their behaviour) held by the 'other'.

8.2.1.i. The role of the 'other' in shame.

> "It is plainly untrue that all cases of feeling shame are cases of public exposure, untrue, that is , that an actual observer is required for shame to be felt. Nor is it true even that the agent must believe, rightly or wrongly, that he is being observed by some other person. One may feel shame when quite alone and knowing this to be so ... the weaker claim, that shame involves imagining an audience, is not correct either. ... All that seems necessary is that [the agent] shift his viewpoint [from that of the observed to that of an observer]." (Taylor op cit:58)
>
> "... if all [shame] requires is that one should occupy an observer's position vis-a-vis oneself then the metaphors of eyes being upon one or being revealed to an audience seem to be rather heavy machinery for making just this point. The problem therefore is to give adequate content to the notion of the audience without introducing what is conceptually irrelevant to feeling shame." (ibid, 59)

What seems to be at issue is whether "another", an observer (real or imagined) is required, (albeit only as a catalyst), for an agent to become conscious <u>of</u> him/herself (as an object capable of being seen, described, assessed) rather than just conscious in the sense of being aware of what s/he is doing. Sartre, as noted, says,

> "...the Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me" (op cit:222)

and elsewhere that

> "I see <u>myself</u> because <u>somebody</u> sees me" (op cit:260).

This is important, because in Sartre's view, we only exist as objects by virtue of the existence of Others as subjects. Without the Other, we would remain at the level of Beings-for-themselves, existing only with unreflective consciousness, and could never take an observer's position vis-a-vis ourselves (Taylor op cit:59). The other is the essential catalyst for our ability to 'see ourselves':

> "The unreflective consciousness does not apprehend the person directly or as its object; the person is presented to consciousness in so far as the person is an object for the other." (Sartre op cit:260)

Taylor does acknowledge that an observer is the means by which we are made aware of ourselves; however, she considers that

> "[t]he observer is merely the means towards this end, and as such he is dispensable." (Taylor op cit:59, emphasis added).

It is not clear (since shame is not possible without this kind of self-awareness) how the means by which it is achieved could be anything other than indispensable. Therefore, to dismiss the Other as "merely" this means is to diminish the importance of the way in which consciousness of the self as an object is achieved. It also implies that Taylor believes such self-awareness is a possibility for human beings in isolation; i.e. that the presence or existence of Others is not the sole means towards it. However, elsewhere she acknowledges that

> "[s]hame requires a sophisticated type of self-consciousness ... it is plainly a state of self-consciousness which centrally relies on the concept of another, for the thought of being seen as one might be seen by another is the catalyst for the emotion." (ibid:67).

Given that Taylor herself thus recognizes this crucial role of the 'other' in shame, it is difficult to see why she then imputes to Sartre the view that this 'other' is a concrete, particular Other, when there is nothing in his account to suggest that he differs from her own view.

Taylor's criticism of Sartre's account of shame and the crucial role played in it by the 'other', therefore appears to rest on a fundamental misconstrual of his discussion of this role. This discussion is not intended by Sartre to show that an actual, specific Other is required for every case of shame but rather that shame is not possible without the kind of self-awareness which derives from our relationship with <u>others in general</u>. As this latter relationship is, according to Sartre, fundamentally important for the nature of our Being, to take his account of shame out of context, as Taylor does, is to entirely miss Sartre's point in discussing it.

<u>8.2.1.ii. Identification with the 'other's' opinion</u>

As noted above, not only does Taylor dispute the indispensability of "the Other" in shame, she also disputes

a) that any observer who may be involved is necessarily "critical of the agent" (60) and

b) that

> "the agent accepts what he takes to be the observer's description of what he is doing" (ibid)
>
> [i.e. that the agent necessarily identifies or concurs with the view of the observer].

In these respects, Taylor's criticism deserves sympathetic consideration. Sartre, she maintains, oversimplifies "the notion of the audience" (ibid) and

she goes on to develop a more complex notion. As she states, "being seen at all" is the fundamental 'trigger' for shame and

> "[h]ow [the agent] is seen, whether he thinks of the audience as critical, approving, indifferent, cynical or naive is a distinguishable step." (ibid).

According to Taylor, therefore, in every case of shame, there are two distinguishable points of view:

1) the view of the 'first audience', which

"sees the agent under some description" (64)

[but not necessarily an evaluative one];

2) the view of a

"second, higher-order" 'audience' (61)

which sees how the agent is (or may be) seen by the 'first audience'.

The way in which Taylor disputes that the 'first audience' is necessarily critical (as it is in Sartre's example of a man making a vulgar gesture - [Sartre op cit:221]) is as follows. She maintains that the first audience's view of the agent could be one of approval. This would not preclude the agent's feeling shame, however, since it may be that the audience is one whose approval the agent rejects. S/he rejects it because s/he regards that audience negatively, i.e., considers it one whose approval reflects badly on the agent by placing the agent on a level with the audience (when s/he does not consider that level to be one of which s/he is worthy). The shame here derives from the agent's potential for being identified with an audience whose values s/he rejects.

This counter-example involving an approving 'first-order' audience thus also indicates the error of the view that the agent experiencing shame always

shares the assessment of him/herself (whether negative or positive) which that audience makes.

According to Taylor, it is by the second, higher-order audience that the agent's negative self-judgement (essential for shame to be felt) is prompted. The realization by the agent that s/he is or may be seen under a certain description, which description is one which ought not to be applicable to her/him, is what causes the feeling of shame. The shame consists in 'being able to be seen in a way in which one ought not to be seen'.

There thus seems to be a considerable degree of validity in Taylor's criticisms of Sartre's example of shame as an over-simplification of the reality. However, by taking

> "the description of the features of shame as we find them in Sartre's example as the description of the paradigm case" (Taylor op cit:64, also 60),

Taylor again misconstrues Sartre's purpose in discussing shame. Sartre does not, like Taylor, attempt a 'pure' analysis of shame for its own sake, nor does he himself posit this example as the "paradigm case". All he seeks to do is to demonstrate that we only exist as objects (for-ourselves and for-Others) by virtue of the existence of others. It is by reference to Others that our 'objectness' is constituted and it is 'being an object' which at bottom gives rise to shame (Sartre op cit:288). The purpose of his example is not, therefore, to give a definitive "description of the features of shame", but rather to make the point that it is only in relation to Others that we are beings susceptible to description and evaluation, and that we are only capable of recognizing such descriptions and evaluations of ourselves (which recognition is

required for shame - we have to 'see how we are seen') by identifying with the Other.

This identification does not necessarily mean that I endorse the view of myself held by the Other, merely that by assuming the position of the Other vis-a-vis myself, I recognize that it is a view which "appears to fit" (Taylor op cit:66) and this recognition causes my shame.

Nor does there seem to be anything unusually inappropriate about using a visual metaphor (i.e. 'being seen') when discussing shame. Indeed, since shame is, as Sartre says, originally derived from our visibility as objects to Others, it seems natural and inevitable that the notion of 'seeing' should be retained metaphorically even in the absence of actual Others. If this metaphorical use is to be misinterpreted so that 'the Other' and 'the audience' are taken literally as elements in every occurrence of shame, which misinterpretation leads to the introduction of "what is conceptually irrelevant" (ibid:59), then Taylor appears to be a prime culprit in her treatment of Sartre's account.

9. ABLAMOWICZ (1984;1992)

The work of Ablamowicz represents a radical departure from the usual way of investigating shame in philosophy, in that it utilizes a genuinely phenomenological methodology. However, many of the conclusions of her study are sufficiently similar to those of the Rawlsian accounts to enable comparisons to be made and to justify including it in the same section.

9.1. Methodology.

In contrast to the loose interpretation of 'phenomenology' given above (see footnote 1), Ablamowicz's study of shame is firmly rooted in the phenomenological tradition proper.

> "Within the phenomenological method, the researcher concentrates on the lived-world of a person and explicates shame in terms of how human experience is revealed for the person in his/her own experiencing of it. The phenomenology begins with the descriptions of everyday life experience and, through the careful reflective analysis of these descriptions, attempts to reach the essential meaning of the given phenomenon." (1984:22-23)

> "... the aim is not just to arrive at <u>what</u> this communication phenomenon is as a pure consciousness that is abstract from the lived world but to specify the basic definition of a lived-experience as it exists for the person who lives through it." (1992:33)

A further aim of the chosen methodology, whereby

> "both the researcher and the subject 'bracket' their natural attitude" (ibid:33-34),

is to enable an understanding of the phenomenon of shame which is unclouded by

> "existing presuppositions or theoretical assumptions" (ibid).[8]

Thus, one of the advantages of Ablamowicz's study is that a genuine attempt at objectivity is inherent in the method, in that it takes features of shame as it is empirically experienced by "selected research subjects" (ibid) as its 'raw material'. By contrast, accounts of shame given by philosophers in the analytical tradition (as indicated earlier) tend to be

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[8]Whether this is indeed possible is a matter for debate and will be considered below.

based largely on their subjective reflections on shame and the extrapolation of these, to provide a characterization which purports to be universally valid.

The data on shame (or "phenomenological description") obtained from the research subjects is then subjected to a series of "reflections" resulting in

i) a "reduction" of the description,

> "to include only those themes that are essential for the existence of the consciousness of experience" (ibid)

and

ii) an "interpretation" of those essential themes in order to give a fundamental definition of shame.

9.2 The "Phenomenological Description"

Ablamowicz organizes the essential themes emerging from the descriptions of shame elicited from her research subjects (PhD students) into the following categories:

1) Personal/situational definitions
2) Personality/attitude
3) Relationships/interaction
4) Body/physical appearance
5) Self-expression (ibid:38)

9.2.1. Objects of shame

In the first category, the objects of shame amongst PhD students are as follows: failure to complete the thesis; failure to work sufficiently

hard; failure to show evidence of knowledge; "hurting people"[9] and "being irresponsible" (ibid:39).

Apart from the last two, these objects share a common feature, namely failure, or an inability to meet what are perceived as expected standards (of the self, or of others). Thus, the similarity between this conclusion and the 'essence' of shame according to the accounts already examined, is clear.

9.2.2. Shame and self-confidence

In the second category, loss of self-confidence is seen as integral to the shame experience and consequent on the recognition that one is

> "lacking in some essential quality(ies)" (ibid:40).

Again, this might be interpreted as a corroboration of the idea that shame entails loss of self-esteem/self-respect, in particular Rawls' point about not possessing the requisite capacities to execute one's plan of life.

9.2.3. Shame and the body

The fourth category, that of the part played by the physical body in shame, reveals elements of shame which are largely omitted in other philosophical accounts. This thus represents another significant

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[9]So far as "hurting people" is concerned, this is an interesting element on which Ablamowicz does not elaborate. However, it is a feature which is commonly considered to be a significant element in guilt (when this is being discussed in contrast to shame) and in particular, it is alleged by De Vos (1960), cited in Lebra (op cit), to be a defining characteristic of shame/guilt among Japanese. Consequently, it will be returned to later, both in the context of discussing distinctions between shame and guilt, and in the consideration of shame cross-culturally.

distinction between Ablamowicz's account and those already considered.

Perhaps most important is the idea that shame involves a desire to hide or disappear:

> "I wanted to drag myself behind the curtain" (ibid:41).

9.2.4. Shame and the divided self

In addition, the loss of one's usual experience of oneself as an integrated whole is brought out:

> "I was looking at myself as I was reduced in size ... " (ibid:42).

This resonates with the idea that in shame one is both observer and observed (cf Taylor op cit:59 and Thrane op cit:153).

9.2.5. Shame and communication/relationships

In terms of self-expression, what emerges is the general withdrawal from, and inability to communicate with, other people, which is endemic in shame experiences, together with a loss of volume and articulateness in speech due to one's loss of confidence (ibid). Finally, in the category of relationships/interaction, these communication difficulties and withdrawal are extended, so that shame is seen as an impediment to successful relationships, or indeed any relationship with others (ibid:43-44).

9.3 Reduction

On the basis of the "essential themes" identified in the phenomenological description, Ablamowicz provides a "synthetic description" of shame, i.e. one

which is derived from the data elicited from, but not explicitly given by, her respondents.

9.3.1. Shame and failure/imperfection

> "Shame is the awareness in consciousness of one's lived experience of imperfection ... Shame is experienced by the doctoral students as 'becoming self-aware of one's imperfections' and is manifest as a feeling of personal failure" (1984:99)

9.3.2. Shame and the body

Further:

> "The experience of shame reveals a subject's vulnerability to being reduced to his/her bodily existence. As an 'I' regards itself as an object of observation by the self or some Other, it becomes separated from and thereby overcome by its body" (ibid:101).

9.3.3. Resolution of shame

Ablamowicz's account differs from the Rawlsian accounts in that there is no mention of replacing failure with subsequent success as the means whereby shame is overcome. Rather, the paradoxical co-existence of the shame sufferer's desire to avoid communication with others (through fear of the others' contemptuous judgement) with a simultaneous urge to speak about one's experience, is highlighted by Ablamowicz (ibid:102). This leads to the conclusion that sharing the shame experience is ultimately the only way in which one can regain one's equilibrium. Moreover, this indicates that rather than being a passive victim in shame (as is sometimes claimed, cf

e.g. Taylor op cit:68), an individual can and most often does act to eliminate shame:

> "... persons ... attempt to replace the passivity with activity by facing shame and coping with it in their own existential ways which are often different from social prescriptions ... it is our choice what kind of signification we attach to the particular situation of shame in the context of our life. And, it is our choice what [sic] and how we deal with the consequences of this experience." (1984:111)[10]

9.4. Critique

As noted above, Ablamowicz's study is to be welcomed for its contribution to demonstrating the importance of attending to empirical data when seeking to establish the essence of shame. Nonetheless, its full potential is not realized, due to a number of flaws in its design.

9.4.1. Research subjects

The selection of the particular 'target-group' of respondents (i.e. PhD students in a 'western' university) is highly suspect, especially in the context of attempting to take account of possible variations in shame cross-culturally. Ablamowicz claims that she has "problematized the universal trait

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[10]Several other authorities are agreed that there are a number of ways in which shame can be 'discharged' by one's own actions (Epstein 1984:42-43; Heller op cit:20-21,23; Broucek op cit:72-73). There will be further discussion of these below, particularly in the context of comparing philosophical and psychoanalytical accounts of shame's phenomenology.

in shame" (ibid:113) by ensuring cultural and sexual variation between her respondents. Thus, although she seeks, and expects to find, such (a) universal trait(s)[11], Ablamowicz nonetheless also seeks to eliminate the possibility that cultural differences may have an influence on the way in which shame is experienced. She concludes from her data that despite such differences,

> "the essential core of the experience of shame remains invariant."(ibid);

(an inevitable conclusion, given her approach). What is not clear, then, is what she means by her statement that

> "it is possible that people from another background or different national/cultural environment may experience shame in a different manner" (ibid).

Moreover, she fails to recognize that the <u>context</u> in which such culturally variable respondents are experiencing shame may also have a significant influence, which may override cultural differences. Thus, given what is expected of doctoral students in 'western' universities, it is not surprising that their experiences of shame should show a high level of similarity.[12] Indeed, by concentrating on doctoral students, Ablamowicz shows that she has already made assumptions about the nature of shame:

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[11]This is of course the purpose of a phenomenological eidetic approach; see the definition at the outset of this Chapter.

[12]cf also Johnson et al (1987:362):
"All of the present subjects are college students and it is probable that the Korean and Taiwan Chinese students are more westernized than would be a broader sample of Korean or Taiwanese subjects."

Also Mesquita & Frijda (1992:200):
"In many studies, use is made of university students, but obviously the social position and provenance of students may be quite different in different cultures."

"The context of a university graduate school offers an especially appropriate environment for shame situations to occur ... working on a doctoral degree is a process in which one's ability to perform and achieve is constantly exposed, criticized and questioned ... doctoral students ... experience a strong sense of competition ... with their own inner image of the perfect self." (1992:34, emphasis added)

Such a bias in choice of research subjects exposes at least one presupposition on the part of the researcher, i.e. that one of the 'essential properties' of shame is a sense of failure derived from inability to achieve. This sits ill with the professed suspension of existing ideas about shame:

> "To avoid any behavioral or sociocultural conditioning qualifications and to direct the focus on the meaning and reality of shame in its immediacy, this researcher's preconceptions were initially suspended." (ibid:46, emphasis added)

10. CRITIQUE OF RAWLSIAN ACCOUNTS OF SHAME

It was noted in the Introduction to this chapter that the so-called 'Rawlsian' accounts of shame showed certain similarities. Various criticisms to which they might be subjected will now be discussed. In so doing, the work of Deigh (1983) will make a considerable contribution.

10.1. Shame and self-respect/esteem.

According to Rawls, it will be recalled, having self-respect or self-esteem amounts to having what one believes to be a worthwhile "plan of life" and the requisite capacities for executing it and

> "shame is the emotion evoked by shocks to our self-respect ..." (Rawls op cit, 443).

It must now be considered whether such a characterization is adequate to encompass all occasions when shame is experienced. This entails determining whether there exist plausible counter-examples in which a) a person experiences a blow to his/her self-esteem but nonetheless does <u>not</u> feel shame and conversely b) a person does feel shame, but on account of something other than such a blow, so that his/her self-esteem remains intact.

Deigh (op cit:230-231) supplies a convincing counter-example which satisfies the first requirement outlined above, that of loss of self-esteem with no ensuing shame. A boy, aspiring to become a tennis professional on the basis of early successes in limited competitive encounters, suffers his first convincing defeat after meeting players of greater skill. He quickly recognizes that his game is not of a suitable calibre for a professional tennis player, i.e., he discovers he is deficient in the necessary skill to realize his ambition ("plan of life"). His self-esteem, (according to Rawls' definition of it) is thus reduced, in that he sees himself as being less competent than he previously believed, but he feels no shame, only disappointment. (He need not feel shame, since he gave an adequate performance, presumably his best, which no observer would consider to be poor.) Thus, whereas the Rawlsian account maintains that loss of self-esteem inevitably produces shame, the above example demonstrates the error of this view.

There are indeed a number of situations in which shame may be experienced without one's self-esteem being affected. For example, one may feel shame over something which could in no way be construed as an expression or reflection of one's excellence - such as

one's name. If this has humorous or ridiculous connotations (as in the case of 'Pratt', for example), and one is consequently made an object of ridicule, it is readily conceivable that this may result in feeling ashamed of one's name. However, since one's name cannot be said to have a material influence on one's aims or ideals, nor on one's ability to realize them, this example can immediately be seen to pose a problem for the Rawlsian characterization.

10.2 Shame and the opinion of others

In addition, it is possible to feel shame as a result of unfavourable judgement of oneself by others even when one does not share that judgement (cf Taylor's discussion of the Sartrean example examined above). Thus, if one has an ideal to which one conforms completely, one can experience the derision of others (who do not recognize such an ideal as worthy) yet not feel shame. However, it is more commonly the case that it is just the others' negative opinion which of itself causes shame (despite one's own unshaken conviction that one's ideals and abilities are not defective).[13] For example, a woman

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[13]Cf Heller (1985:14):
"If our Ego-ideal is shaped according to our conscience, we can be ashamed even if we measure up completely ... [f]or should this Ego-ideal contradict the norms of external authority when it is the judgement of the latter with which we are confronted, we will still feel shame."

may believe that being a good mother means spending time playing with her children rather than doing housework. Nonetheless, when visitors call and her house is dirty and/or untidy, (and she senses their disapproval) she feels ashamed. This again, then, constitutes a case of shame which the Rawlsian definition cannot accommodate.

The very real capacity for shame possessed by young children and documented by, for example, Erikson (1965), is yet another fact which undermines the conception of shame as dependent on shocks to one's self-esteem (Deigh op cit, 233-234). A child may indeed have a sense of personal worth; however, that sense cannot intelligibly be said to derive from having a consciously-devised plan of life and a belief in one's capacities to execute it. Thus, the shame experienced by children must have its source elsewhere.

10.3 Shame and 'status incongruency'

A further counter-example to the Rawlsian conception of shame is perhaps the most interesting and significant, and one which suggests a connection between the form and values of the wider society or culture and the way in which shame is conceptualized. Deigh (op cit:234-235) distinguishes two kinds of

society. One has an ethic of achievement, which is allied to a meritocratic social structure with (real or ideal) social mobility, (i.e., the kind of society in which Rawls' conception of shame has been engendered); the other has an 'aristocratic' ethic, such as might be found in a rigid class or caste society. In the latter, shame, far from being associated with failure to achieve one's self-allotted ambition, results from failing to conduct oneself in a manner appropriate to someone of a particular rank or status. Thus, it is concerned with <u>incongruency</u> between (social) expectation and reality.[14]

10.3.1 Shame of status

There is yet a further manifestation of shame in relation to status for which the Rawlsian characterization cannot account. In some societies (particularly in many 'traditional' cultures) there is the shame of ascribed status. In this case, a whole status can be shameful. Examples of this include India (the 'untouchable' caste); the 'old South' (the slave class) and Japan (the ghetto class). In such societies, the modern, individualist 'liberal' understanding of shame exemplified in the Rawlsian account is inapplicable. The question of shame does not relate to how well or badly one performs in one's status, but has to do with the absolute moral evaluation of the whole status.[15]

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[14]Cf Lebra (op cit), whose work on Japan will be considered in Chapter Four.

[15]The implications of such an 'illiberal' interpretation of shame, particularly in terms of the question of shame's value, will be considered in Chapter Three below.

10.4 Shame and identity

It may be argued that the incongruency referred to in section 10.3 above is also precisely what the Rawlsian view describes as the essence of shame (i.e., a discrepancy between ideal and actual fact). However, an important distinction which is lost by conflating the two interpretations of shame in this way is that between a view of shame applicable to individuals who construe their personal identity in terms of how they plan or organize and conduct their life, i.e. who believe their identity is created by themselves, and that which applies to those whose identity is ascribed to them by virtue of their position in society.

This important point, of how one's identity is constituted, is particularly relevant to considerations about shame in different cultures. The Rawlsian view of shame arises from and is inevitably appropriate to and acceptable in a 'liberal' society in which things such as one's class, gender, race etc. are ostensibly incidental and external attributes of individuals, and not defining characteristics of one's identity (Deigh op cit). Contrast this with a society in which what one is (in India, a Brahmin, or an Untouchable, for example) determines who one is.

10.5 Shame and the sense of worth

Allied to the points about status and identity is the question of one's sense of worth. As already established, for Rawls one's sense of one's worth is derived from one's aims and ideals and those actions and conduct which are consistent with achieving those aims and matching those ideals (Rawls op cit:408; Deigh op cit:235; cf Thrane op cit). However, in a

hierarchical society, just as one's identity is ascribed to one, (rather than created by oneself), so too is one's sense of worth derived from one's position in that social structure (Deigh op cit:241). Questions of

> "how well or badly [one] conducts [one's] life" (ibid)

have no relevance to one's worth in such a society. So in this case, Rawlsian shame (understood as the response to a diminishment in one's sense of worth) is unintelligible, since the sense of worth operative here is independent from success or failure in conducting one's life in accordance with one's professed ideals. What <u>is</u> at stake, rather, is whether or not one's conduct is in keeping with someone of one's (fixed) status and associated worth. Indeed, one's worth may be determined absolutely, purely on the basis of one's allotted social position, in which case one's conduct has no bearing whatsoever on that worth.

10.6 Shame and the body

One important aspect of shame which the Rawlsian characterization, in its preoccupation with and emphasis on 'life-plans', leaves out, is shame of the body. As noted above, Ablamowicz's account highlights the significance of this. Not only in traditional societies but also in contemporary western society, discrimination on grounds of appearance persists.[16] It is not acceptable to 'censor out' such elements of shame, simply because they cannot be accommodated within the model one wishes to construct.

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[16]cf the work of e.g. Goffman on stigma.

(b) Psychoanalytical Studies

There are a number of reasons for the inclusion of selected psychoanalytical accounts of shame in this Chapter.[17] Psychoanalysis is a significantly different tradition from both philosophy and anthropology[18] and the consideration of shame currently enjoys some prominence in this discipline (as indicated in both the Preface and the Introduction). Its view of shame is thus an important one when attempting to gain an idea of contemporary academic understanding of this concept and the way in which such understanding may vary across disciplines.

The way in which psychoanalytical studies will be incorporated in this study is twofold. Firstly, in this Chapter there will be a consideration of the current situation in the discipline with regard to the interpretation of shame, i.e. a descriptive account of shame according to selected practitioner/theorists will be given, followed by a comparison of such an account with the philosophical accounts already examined above. Secondly, in Chapter Three below, there will be some discussion of the evidential basis for the claims of psychoanalysts concerning shame (e.g. the question of its repression or denial); i.e. their data will be assessed.

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[17]and in Chapter Three below on the significance and value of shame.

[18]However, historically psychoanalysis has been important in the anthropology of shame; as noted in the Introduction, both Mead's (op cit) and Benedict's (op cit) accounts are Freudian, and certain other cross-cultural studies of 'shame' (cf e.g. Epstein 1984) employ an explicitly psychoanalytic model in their interpretations. There is also at least one paper on shame published in the Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology (cf Nachman 1984).

The 'phenomenological' descriptions of shame given by writers in the psychoanalytical tradition have, understandably, generally been situated within studies of clinical cases in which shame has been recognized as a significant element. Nonetheless, the discussion of shame's phenomenology tends to be very clearly delineated in such works. This facilitates the task of comparison with the conclusions of philosophical accounts, referred to in the previous paragraph (see section 15 below).

As indicated in the Introduction, the founding father of psychoanalysis, Freud, paid little (if any serious) attention to shame, for reasons which have already been suggested and which will be explored below[19] and as one writer notes:

> "Except for isolated contributions ..., the study of shame and of narcissistic phenomena remained, to a greater or lesser extent, on the sidelines for more than 30 years after Freud's death." (Lansky 1995:1079).

It is not until the work of Erikson (1950) and Piers (1953) that shame begins to be overtly and extensively discussed in psychoanalytical writings, and Lansky identifies the work of Lewis (1971) as the point at which

> "[t]he reemergence of shame as a major and central focus of psychoanalytic thinking was ushered in ..." (ibid).

Since then, there have been a number of significant psychoanalytical examinations of shame. A limited selection of these will be considered below.[20]

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[19]A number of interpretations of Freud's own thoughts on shame will be presented in Chapter Three.

[20]The accounts to be examined have been selected on the basis of their seminality or substantial furtherance of the understanding of shame. They are intended to represent the range of views of psychoanalytic thought on the subject, rather than comprise a comprehensive review of all the existing

Despite the chronological priority of Erikson's work, since the work of Rawls (op cit) clearly owes much to the understanding of shame elaborated by Piers (as will become evident), the latter's account will be taken as the starting point of this part.

11. PIERS (1953,1971)[21]

Piers identifies four different interpretations of shame: 1) as an affect or emotion; 2) as a neurotic symptom; 3) as a character trait and 4) as

> "a distinctly differentiated form of inner tension which as such is a normal concomitant of ego development and superego formation[22], at least in our culture.[23](1971:18, emphasis added).

It is shame in the latter sense with which Piers is concerned, and to which his structural definition, outlined below, refers.

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work on shame in this field, which is beyond the scope of the current study.

[21]References are to the 1971 edition.

[22]As an extensive discussion of the well-known Freudian concepts of ego, superego and ego-ideal is not possible here, a summary definition must suffice. The ego broadly corresponds to the individual 'self', the superego represents an internalized authority (usually deriving from parental influence) regulating the ego, while the ego-ideal, as the term suggests, represents an idealized model or image of behaviour, character etc., again deriving from an external source (possibly, but not necessarily, parental), to which the ego aspires. According to Piers, the concept of ego-ideal is closely implicated in shame, and as such will be explored more fully below.

[23]It is clear from this passage that Piers recognizes the potential cultural relativity of the nature of shame, a recognition which sets him apart from many of his contemporaries writing about shame.

11.1 The structure of shame

According to Piers:

> "Shame arises out of a tension between the ego and the ego ideal" (ibid:23).

At this point, therefore, it is clearly necessary to consider the concept of ego ideal in more detail.

11.1.1 The ego ideal

> "The ego ideal represents the sum of the positive identifications with the parental images. Both the loving, the reassuring parent, the parent who explicitly and implicitly gives the permission to become like him, and the narcissistically expecting parent and the parent who imposes his own unobtained ideals on the child may be represented here." (ibid:26, original emphasis)

In addition to these parental identifications are those formed later in life:

> "... the ego ideal contains layers of later identifications, more superficial ... and more subject to change than the earlier ones, but of the greatest social importance. ... It is important to recognize that the images that go into the formation of this part of the ego ideal do not have to be parental ones at all. The sibling group and the peer group are much more significant." (ibid:27, original emphasis)

A further aspect of the ego ideal is that it contains the "goals" of the ego's drive towards mastery (ibid) and it

> "is in continuous dynamic interfunction with the unconscious and conscious awareness of the ego's potentialities."(ibid, original emphasis).

11.1.2 Shame as failure

This concept of ego ideal, particularly in its latter aspect, thus explains the characterization of shame as

> "that particular inner tension which stems from failure to reach one's own potentialities.",

arising

> "whenever goals and images presented by the ego ideal are not reached."(ibid:28).

Shame

> "thus indicates a real 'shortcoming'" (ibid:24),

and is associated with failure (ibid).[24]

11.1.3. Shame and contempt

In addition, the anxiety in shame derives from the threat of abandonment:

> "Behind the feeling of shame stands ... the fear of contempt which, on an even deeper level of the unconscious, spells fear of abandonment ... this anxiety ... draws its terror from the earlier established and probably ubiquital separation anxiety." (ibid:29)

This fear manifests itself later in the developmental sequence as fear

> "not ... of active punishment by superiors ... but social expulsion, like ostracism." (ibid).

12. ERIKSON (1950;1965)[25]

In Erikson's developmental schema, he identifies "Eight Ages of Man", each of which is characterized by a pair of polarized concepts, one positive and one negative. In the context of this schema, his discussion of shame is as the opposing concept to

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[24]This structural definition of shame thus clearly represents possibly the most significant influence on the characterization of shame outlined by Rawls (op cit).

[25]References are to the revised edition.

autonomy. It is also coupled with the concept of doubt.

The potential for shame arises, according to Erikson, around the time when an infant learns to stand upright unaided, due to "muscular maturation" (243). This acquisition of a degree of autonomy is increased due to the fact that a greater degree of manipulative control over his or her environment is also achieved at this time (ibid). However, this upright stance and muscular control also open the way for the associated experience of frustration and shame both at the <u>inability</u> to exercise control, and particularly at the child's relative smallness in comparison with large adults (ibid:244-245). One sphere of life in which these two issues are experienced keenly is apparently that of bowel training. As Thrane notes,

> "It is at this stage that the child begins to dread parental disgust and his own lack of self-control." (op cit:150)

Thus, according to Erikson:

> "This stage ... becomes decisive for the ratio of love and hate, cooperation and wilfulness, freedom of self-expression and its suppression. From a sense of self-control without loss of self-esteem comes a lasting sense of good will and pride; from a sense of loss of self-control and of foreign overcontrol comes a lasting propensity for doubt and shame." (1960:245-246).

13. LEWIS (1971)

As noted above, Lewis' work on shame represents a watershed in the psychoanalytical discussion of the topic; it might almost be said that she 'rediscovered' shame for psychoanalysis. She too recognizes that there is more than one conceptualization of shame: it is both an affect and a motive of behaviour (63). In

the former, the emphasis is on the affective aspect of the phenomenon; in the latter, it is on the cognitive aspect (65). However, it is shame according to the first interpretation with which her work is primarily concerned.

Her major thesis is that shame is ubiquitous in therapeutic sessions, but that in the majority of cases, it is not identified by the person experiencing it. This difficulty in the identification of shame, Lewis suggests, is a manifestation of the <u>denial</u> of shame (196), which is one of three defining characteristics of the phenomenon. The others are:

> "reduction of the self both in size and in efficiency of functioning" (197);

and

> "difficulty in the discharge of hostility." (198).

Each of these three aspects will be considered in turn.

13.1 Shame and denial[26]

There are two aspects to the denial of shame, amounting to two different 'types' of shame experience.[27] According to Lewis, which of these variants prevails depends on the degree of

> "availability or overtness of affect" (ibid).

13.1.1 "Overt, unidentified shame" (ibid:197)

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[26]The significance of the denial of shame will be discussed further below, in Chapter Three.

[27]This is not to suggest that Lewis considers there to be more than one 'kind' of shame, in the sense in which Taylor (op cit) denies, merely that the mode in which it is experienced varies.

In this experience, as the term suggests, the shame affect is overtly experienced (as verifiable by observation by another of various 'markers' of shame[28]), yet the subject is unable or unwilling to recognize it as such.

13.1.2 "By-passed" shame (ibid)

By contrast, in "by-passed" shame the subject

> "is aware of the cognitive content of shame-connected events" (ibid)

yet does not, as would be expected in the face of such appropriate "antecedent events" (cf Mesquita & Frijda op cit), experience the emotion of shame at all, except to register awareness in consciousness of a

> "'wince,' 'blow' or 'jolt.'" (ibid).

13.2 Shame and the self

The involvement of the self in the experience of shame is perhaps its most significant characteristic. Such involvement is two-fold: first, the self is always the focus of the cognitive content of shame, which emphasizes "the varieties of deficiencies of the self." (86); second, the functioning of the self is disrupted due to its perception and experience as small, weak and incapable.

13.3 Discharge of hostility

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[28]These markers include behavioural indicators (both verbal and non-verbal), such as stammering, hesitant, or inaudible speech, avoidance of eye-contact etc. together with evidence in the content of what is said by the client of any characteristic feature of shame experience (outlined in more detail below, see subsection 14.4).

According to Lewis,

> "Shame evokes retaliatory rage at the 'other' or at the witness [i.e., the one who has directed the self's negative attention towards itself], but since it is shame-rage, hostility is quickly directed back upon the self ..." (198)

In shame, the reason for hostility is the self's deficiencies, thus the self is both the source and the target of that hostility (87). The co-existence of positive feelings (i.e. valuation of the self and the other) alongside the negative feelings of humiliation and rage, again towards both the other and the self (all of which is characteristic of the ambivalence inherent in every shame experience), makes the discharge of hostility extremely difficult if not impossible (ibid, 198).

13.4 Characteristics of shame

The three categories identified above cover the general characteristics of shame. Within these three categories, a number of more detailed characteristics can be identified, e.g.:

a) concern for the opinion of others:

> "... the consciousness of something dishonoring, ridiculous or indecorous about oneself requires the existence of what James (1890) called a 'judging companion'. But the self must share the 'other's' standard of judgment if shame is to be felt." (64);

thus,

b) "The question of personal responsibility is unclear":

since

> "the self is not directly and not solely responsible for its own feeling of disgrace." (ibid);

c) the boundaries of the self are indistinct:

> "... shame can be experienced <u>for</u> someone else ..." (ibid);

d) it is thus also unclear whether the source of shame is strictly the self, or the other (65).

e) shame involves a reduction in the dignity or status of the self (68);

f) it also involves failure in the functioning of the self (ibid);

g) shame is triggered by multiple stimuli which may be

> "one's own aggressions" ('moral' shame) or "a defeat, disappointment, or failure" ('nonmoral' shame) (84);

h) in shame,

> "the content or [sic] consciousness is likely to be about the sense of identity." (86);

i) resolution of, or defence against, shame tends to be effected by personal achievement (89).

14. WURMSER (1981)

Echoing Lewis (whose work, interestingly, he nowhere cites), Wurmser considers shame, though neglected, to be a highly significant, if often hidden, element in therapeutic encounters:

> "...the clinical significance of shame seems paramount. Not only are shame affects directly observed and expressed in therapy, but, even more pervasively, they appear in veiled form." (27)

14.1 Three 'types' of shame

Wurmser, like his predecessors, identifies a variety of possible interpretations of shame, as for example an affect, character trait, symptom etc. (49), but within his phenomenological study (Chapter 2 passim) concludes that there are "three major phenomenological types of shame." (49). These are:

1) "... anxiety about something impending - shame anxiety";

2) "... a reaction about something that has already occurred - shame affect in the narrower sense"; and

3) "... a character attitude that should prevent the other two - a shame attitude" (ibid).

Of these, the first two clearly represent what Taylor (op cit) refers to as forward-looking and backward-looking shame, while the third is less to do with shame affect and more dispositional.[29]

14.1.1 Shame anxiety

> "Shame is a specific form of anxiety evoked by the imminent danger of unexpected exposure, humiliation, and rejection." (1981:49)

In this form, shame primarily functions as a warning to the self that what may at present be a situation in which only mild rejection is implicit, has the potential to become one in which there is scope for humiliation of "traumatic proportions". (50)

14.1.2. Shame proper

> According to Wurmser,
>
> "This complex affect is clearly the center of the entire range of shame affects." (ibid).

It follows the actual exposure of whatever it is in the self which is regarded by that self as weakness, and

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[29]cf Schneider (1977) on "discretion-shame" (see Chapter Three below.

> "entails self-condemnation and attempts somehow to expiate the disgrace incurred, both to wipe out the stain and to prevent further degradation." (ibid).

14.1.3. Shame attitude

This dispositional manifestation of shame acts as a protective and preventive measure against the encounter of situations or engagement in activities which are likely to lead to shame anxiety or shame affect proper. It is "a rigid defense structure built into the character" (ibid) which ensures that an individual will avoid finding him or herself in such circumstances.

14.2 Bipolarity of shame

In addition to these three 'divisions' of shame, Wurmser further identifies its "bipolar" nature. i.e., shame typically has two aspects:

1) the "object pole" ("the factor in front of which one is ashamed" [43, original emphasis]) and
2) the "subject pole" ("the aspect of which one is ashamed" [ibid, original emphasis]);

in other words, the judge and the content.

The former

> "is originally always a person; later it is an inner representative of such a person, usually vested in the superego." (44).

The latter in turn has three aspects: a shameful action, its consequences and

> "its reflection on the whole acting person" (ibid).

14.3 Content of shame

This revolves round a typical set of issues:

1) weakness of the self or failure of the self in competition (27);
2) dirtiness of the self and disgust with the self;
3) defectiveness of the self (mental or physical);
4) loss of self-control (emotional or physical) (28).

More specifically, these include:

a) sexual exposure (32);
b) failure to achieve (ibid);
c) character faults (33);
d) cowardice (34);
e) giving up on an undertaking (37);
f) failure "to fulfill expectations vested in a certain self-image held by [the] self" (40).

14.4 Discharge of shame

Shame, once experienced, can be alleviated by a number of strategies. These include:

1) "turning passive into active by showing another person as ridiculous and contemptible instead of oneself" (28);
2) self-aggrandizement, to oneself or others (ibid);
3) "provoking humiliation (externalization)" (ibid).

This latter strategy may take the form of creating life-situations in which the experience of shame before actual others is inevitable. It is regarded as a defence against the allegedly more painful "internalized shame" which occurs when the object-pole of shame has been introjected by the self (45).

15. Comparison with philosophical accounts

It can be seen from the foregoing that there are a number of points on which the philosophical characterization of shame outlined in the first part of this Chapter and the psychoanalytical accounts just described resemble one another.

15.1 Failure

As indicated in footnote 24 above, perhaps the most striking similarity is that between the Rawlsian characterization of shame as failure to meet the self's ideals or standards (cf Rawls, Richards, Thrane) and Piers's conception of shame as failure to reach the ego ideal's goals and images (op cit:28), which is echoed particularly by Wurmser (op cit:40; see subsection 14.3 (f) above). However, there are other resonances.

15.2 Contempt/ostracism and concern for others' opinion

It will be remembered that Rawls' conception of self-worth is that it is partly dependent on the good opinion of one's associates and that withdrawal of this is an occasion for shame (op cit:440-442). This is similar to Piers' claim that shame involves the fear of contempt and/or "social expulsion" (op cit:28) and Wurmser's identification of shame as anxiety signalling imminent rejection (op cit:49). The concern for the opinion of others is also reflected in Lewis (op cit:64). There is dispute however, as to whether shame entails concurrence between the self's and the other's standard of judgment (ibid). Some philosophers argue that it does (e.g. Thrane op cit) while Taylor (op cit) makes a strong case for the view

that it does not (echoed by e.g. Deigh [op cit] and Heller [op cit]).

15.3 Autonomy and self-control

Erikson's central claim is that shame stems from the lack of self-control and autonomy. Richards (op cit) refers to shame as resulting from failure of the self's competence, for example in controlling appetites and in "lack of mastery in execution" (253). The same idea is expressed by Lewis (op cit:68) and Wurmser (op cit:28). Thrane also emphasizes the significance of the lack of autonomy as a major source of shame (op cit:152-153).[30]

15.4 Responsibility

The question of the part played by personal responsibility in shame appears to be primarily a preoccupation of contemporary philosophers[31] and is

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[30]Thrane correctly points out that "exploration of the reasons for th[e] desirability [of autonomy] has not been common in analytic philosophy." (ibid). He further claims that "To lose autonomy is always shameful; autonomy is part of dignity." (ibid). However, his assumption that autonomy is a supreme human value is questionable. There may be cultures in which autonomy and individuality are seen as aberrations from the norm and where the values of equality and sameness are emphasized (Rosaldo [1983] claims that the Ilongot are such a culture). Such questions can only be decided empirically. The error is in taking a particular culture's preoccupation and elevating it to the status of a necessary condition of shame. This is similar to O'Hear's point about the importance of public reputation in some cultures and the subsequent mistaking of this as an essential element in shame (see subsection 4.1 above, p.21).

[31]This preoccupation with the attribution of fault or blame appears to be ubiquitous in 'western' culture (cf Metge 1986:33) and like that of autonomy is one of the potential sources of fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of shame across cultures. There will

not extensively discussed in the psychoanalytical writings considered, with the exception of Lewis, who agrees that

> "... the self is not directly and not solely responsible for its own feeling of disgrace." (op cit:64).

15.5 Reduction in status/self esteem

The Rawlsian identification of damage to self esteem as intrinsic in shame is (despite its contention by e.g. Deigh) supported by Lewis (op cit:68), although she does not similarly elevate it to the status of the defining characteristic.

15.6 Identity

Like Thrane, Lewis notes that

> "the content or [sic] consciousness is likely to be about the sense of identity." (op cit:86).

15.7 Discharge/resolution of shame

In respect of the ways in which a person experiencing shame deals with it in order to resume normal functioning, there is a considerably greater variety of strategies identified by the psychoanalysts than the philosophers. The latter are almost unanimous in the view that replacing failure with success is the only means by which shame may be overcome. However, as is indicated by Ablamowicz and others (cf footnote 10), several options are in fact available and adopted by different people in different circumstances. Thus, although (like the Rawlsian accounts) Lewis limits her view of the only effective

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be some further limited discussion of the notion of responsibility in Chapter Three below.

"defence against" shame to "personal achievement" (op cit:89), Wurmser emphasizes the expression of contempt for another (often the person(s) originally responsible for shaming the individual) as a particularly common reaction to being shamed. The expression of rage or aggression (although, as Lewis points out, often directed back against the self) is also generally agreed as a means of discharging shame (cf Epstein op cit).

16. Summary of the characteristics of shame

At this stage, it is possible to review the preceding accounts and thus arrive at a summary of the defining characteristics of shame as it is understood by many modern thinkers:

1) It has an intimate relationship with one's sense of self or identity;

2) It is occasioned by the belief or the perception of a discrepancy between what 'ought to be' and what 'is' in terms of that self; more specifically by <u>failure</u> to meet standards, ideals or values, whether imposed on the self by the self (most often) or by others (less commonly);

3) It thus always entails a negative self-assessment;

4) The result of such an assessment is a sense of damaged or reduced self-esteem;

5) It involves the idea of (the possibility of) 'being seen' from another's (i.e. an objective) point of view;

6) It is <u>not</u> related to ideas about responsibility, i.e. it can be felt for things which it is not within one's power to alter, or which one played no personal part in bringing about.

17. Summary and Conclusion

This Chapter has surveyed the (loosely) 'phenomenological' accounts of shame of certain contemporary Western philosophers and psychoanalysts. The content of these has been 'reduced' to give a description of the fundamental features of shame, which has been subjected to various criticisms. Such criticisms, especially those of Deigh (op cit), while valid, are nonetheless themselves directed towards establishing a definition of shame which can encompass every aspect of this concept. Such an attempt, while valuable as a corrective to a too-narrow view such as Rawls', is itself misplaced. In showing that there is an important connection between the conceptualization of identity, worth and thus shame and the organization and values of the wider society, Deigh has already (implicitly) indicated that understandings of shame generated in one culture are unlikely to lend themselves to universalization. The lesson to be drawn from highlighting such defects in the Rawlsian (read 'twentieth century western') characterization of shame, then, is that rather than seeking to determine a universal structural definition, which embraces every possible manifestation of shame, attention should be paid to elaborating the ways in which differences in social structures and cultural values are reflected in differences in shame experiences and in their understanding.

This is precisely what is argued by those researchers who take a 'social constructionist' viewpoint in studying emotions, whose approach will be examined in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

'SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM': 'SHAME' IN CONTEXT

As noted in the previous chapter, to search for the 'eidos' of shame is regarded by some as a misdirection of effort, given the evident relationship between aspects of the broader sociocultural context in which shame occurs and the way in which it is interpreted (as suggested by examples such as Deigh's). The general consensus among those who are attempting to furnish a more sociological account of shame is that emotional experience does not occur in a vacuum but is influenced in important ways by such contextual factors; however, the extent of this influence is a matter for debate.

1. Method and structure

In what follows, a brief outline of the social constructionist perspective as it is formulated at a metatheoretical level will first be given, drawing on a number of sources, then its specific implications for the study of emotions will be considered. An attempt will also be made to show its potential value as an approach in the comparative analysis of emotion concepts. A survey of a selection of ethnographic accounts of variations in the self-construct of a number of cultures will be made and the implications of these for the nature of 'shame' will be considered, together with an example of the application of a constructionist perspective in an account of the concept of 'shame' in another culture. The validity of the social constructionist approach will be assessed in the concluding section.

2. General theory

At its most fundamental level, social constructionism is concerned with questioning assumptions about the foundation and nature of knowledge in general. It rejects both the empiricist conception of knowledge as a reflection of an objectively existent 'real world', obtained by induction and verified by reference to the senses, and the rationalist conception according to which knowledge is fashioned by the cognitive capacities (thought, categorization, 'information processing') of human individuals. It seeks to transcend the dualism of such conceptions and substitute a view of knowledge as generated in the process of social intercourse, as

> "not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather, something people do together" (Gergen, 1985:270).

If 'knowledge' is thus seen as a social artifact, produced in specific historical and cultural circumstances, then its sources become potential objects of sociological, historical and anthropological enquiry.

Such a radically different conception of knowledge is inevitably resistant to acceptance. As Gergen notes,

> "The investments in and sense of security fostered by the enduring traditions are profound." (ibid, 272).

In particular, whilst social constructionism challenges the criteria by reference to which empiricism 'verifies facts about the world' (regarding

> "so-called 'reports of one's experience' [as] linguistic constructions guided and shaped by historically contingent conventions of discourse" [ibid]),

it does not itself provide alternative criteria by which the 'truth' may be established. Indeed, it

calls into question the concept of 'truth' itself, this being seen as whatever the participants in the discourse giving rise to 'knowledge' agree counts as 'truth' at any given time. Social constructionism is thus a relativistic theory and as such is subject to the usual criticisms of relativism. This is another reason for potentially widespread rejection of its claims. However, whilst it does not offer an alternative account of the objectively valid foundations of knowledge, if the demand for such foundations can be suspended, a social constructionist perspective can nonetheless be valuable and furnish interesting and thought-provoking accounts of phenomena in many domains of enquiry. One such domain is that of human emotion.

3. The social construction of emotions.

In the field of psychology, the theory concerning the social construction of emotions is but one aspect of a more general view of individual experience, and 'mental' concepts in particular, as irreducibly social in origin. A seminal work propounding such a view is that of Mead (1934) and the philosophical investigations of Wittgenstein (1953) and his successors into the relationships between social circumstances and subjective phenomena such as intentions, motives, thoughts etc., manifest the same preoccupations.

It is particularly important when considering the specific application of a social constructionist perspective to issues in psychology, to note that it not only offers an explanation of how different conceptualizations, theories and analytical tools are generated and developed in accordance with specific historical and cultural contexts but goes beyond this

to claim that the subject matter of psychology itself derives from social sources.

To understand the precise meaning of such a claim with regard to emotions, it is necessary to summarize the main propositions of the social constructionist theory of emotions.

There are six major claims made by constructionist theory concerning emotional experience:

a) Emotions are cognitive phenomena, that is, they can be characterized as involving a complex of <u>attitudes</u> comprising beliefs, evaluations and desires.

b) Such attitudes are not natural and innate, but are acquired during socialization into a particular culture, i.e., they are <u>learned</u>, and their specific content is determined by the cultural beliefs and values of the community.

c) Contrary to the common view that emotion attitudes and emotion 'feeling' (taken to be, variously, a physiological disturbance, a bodily or a mental sensation) are two ontologically distinct and sequential aspects of emotional experience, the attitudes in terms of which an emotion may be characterized are themselves constitutive of emotion 'feeling', which is thus determined by sociocultural factors.

d) Not only are the emotion attitudes which constitute emotion feeling learned, so too is an individual's particular emotional response to a given event or situation dependent on having learned to interpret such events/situations as warranting that emotion. Moreover, the correctly-learned interpretation of an event/situation not only <u>warrants</u> but also <u>requires</u> the individual to respond with the appropriate emotion; the experience of particular

emotions in specific circumstances is therefore prescribed by the community.

e) Emotions thus have a sociocultural function, i.e.,

> "the possession of culturally appropriate emotions serves to restrain undesirable attitudes and behaviour, and to sustain and endorse cultural values." (Armon-Jones 1986:34)

f) Emotions, being cognitive and involving culturally learned attitudes, are amenable to evaluation on grounds of rationality; furthermore, by implication, individuals can be held responsible for their emotions (ibid).

3.1 Methodological considerations

The way in which emotions are conceptualized has important implications for the way in which they should be studied. Contrary to the 'traditional' view of emotions as 'inner states' of individuals (cf e.g. Heelas 1984:23; Needham 1981:76) and thus as entities to be abstracted in order to study them (Harre 1986:4)[1], constructionist theory holds that emotions are (variously) "syndromes", or "transitory social roles" (Averill 1980:305) or at least, cognitive processes comprising a number of component elements (Mesquita and Frijda 1992:179). According to Averill, such 'syndromes' are

> "organized set[s] of responses (behavioral, physiological, and/or cognitive)" and
> " ... no single response is a necessary or sufficient condition for the entire syndrome, although some kinds of responses may be more typical of an emotional syndrome than are other kinds of responses." (Averill 1985:98)

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[1] The methodological difficulties to which such a view gives rise have been considered elsewhere (Reynolds 1989:33-34).

A further aspect of the view of emotions taken by constructionists is that they have a strategic function. As Harré notes:

> "They play roles in forms of action. And actions occur in situations."(op cit:12).

The multi-faceted nature of emotions thus viewed therefore necessitates looking beyond the individual to the "concrete world of contexts and activities" (ibid:4) in which emotions occur. It is this belief in the fundamental importance of context, and the close attention thus paid to it in studying any particular emotion, which distinguishes social constructionism from the 'phenomenological' approach illustrated in Chapter One.

At this point, it is necessary to examine each of the major constructionist claims in considerably more detail. A critique, and assessment of social constructionism's adequacy as a theory of emotions, will be made at the end of this Chapter (see Section 6 below).

3.2 Emotions as cognitions.

The claim that emotions are cognition-based is, of course, not unique to social constructionism. As indicated in the Introduction, in both psychology and philosophy, the idea that emotions are not merely simple, natural, involuntary affective states, but involve cognitive factors such as beliefs, judgements and desires (which together comprise the attitudes associated with various emotions), did not gain ground until the later part of the 1970s (cf Solomon op cit).[2] However, the now accepted validity of such a

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[2] There were, however, earlier significant contributions towards establishing a cognitive theory of emotions, e.g. Arnold 1960; Lazarus 1966.

of such a view provides the foundation on which the constructionists' particular claims for the role of attitudes in emotions are based (see subsection 3.4.3 below).

3.3 The acquisition of emotion attitudes.

The claim that the attitudes involved in emotions are learned rather than innate, and that their content depends on the particular norms, customs, values etc. of the relevant cultural community, can be supported in the following way: the belief that climbing a virtually sheer rockface is dangerous may be natural. However, the judgement that to do so is therefore foolish is not. Suppose a community regards attempts by individuals to accomplish dangerous feats as indicative of personal qualities regarded as commendable (e.g. courage, endurance, physical prowess etc.) Suppose too that the possession of such qualities entitles an individual to a particular status or position of power within the community. Given this context, such attempts would presumably be evaluated as wise (if only for certain categories of community members) rather than foolish.

3.4 The constitution of emotion 'feeling' by attitudes.

The idea that emotion 'feeling' is itself constituted by the relevant attitudes involved in emotional experience is perhaps the aspect of social constructionist theory which is most resistant to acceptance. Whilst acknowledging the possible validity of other constructionist claims, many persist in holding a more traditional view of the nature of such feeling. Thus, before attempting to explain the constructionist claim concerning the constitution of

emotion 'feeling', the conventionally-held views must first be outlined.

3.4.1. Emotion 'feeling' as an inner quale.

The idea that in every emotional experience there is an element which is both individual and subjective, and phenomenally distinct from the attitudes in terms of which the emotion is conceptualized, is widely held (cf Arnold op cit). Precisely what this quale consists in and how it differs from a physiological response (which will be discussed below), and thus how it may be adequately represented conceptually, is not clear. However, it is believed to be an aspect of an emotion which is independent of all other emotional 'components'.

3.4.2. Emotion 'feeling' as a physiological disturbance

It is evident that many emotional experiences involve a physiological response (the release of hormones, e.g. adrenalin; an increase in heartrate; perspiration etc.) which are unquestionably biological and thus viewed as 'natural'. The way such physiological disturbances are consciously 'felt' by the individual experiencing the emotion leads some (cf e.g. Perkins 1966) to the perception that such disturbances are the essential emotion feeling.

Either of the above views, if accurate, poses problems for social constructionist theory, given its claim that not only some (e.g. attitudes) but <u>all</u> components of an emotional experience are constituted socioculturally. Firstly, if there is a realm of emotion feeling which is ontologically distinct from the other aspects of emotion (attitudes, expression etc.), it is not clear how such a realm could

intelligibly be said to be influenced by sociocultural factors. Secondly, if emotion feeling is equated with physiological responses, understood as natural, it is again unclear how such responses could be construed as socioculturally constituted. Even if it be accepted that there is a causal relationship between socioculturally constituted attitudes and resulting physiological changes, and that thus emotion 'feeling' is indirectly affected by cultural factors, this is not the same as the claim that emotion feeling is itself constituted by emotion attitudes, which is what constructionism maintains.

3.4.3 The constructionist characterization of emotion 'feeling'

If neither an inner quale nor a physiological disturbance constitutes the 'feeling' element in any emotion, what convincing alternative account of such 'feeling' might constructionism substitute? The requirement of constructionism, in order to furnish such an account, is to demonstrate that neither qualia nor physiological disturbances are necessary components of a 'felt' emotion.

3.4.3.i. Inner qualia and behavioural expression

Armon-Jones (op cit: 47-48) cites Wittgenstein on joy (1981:487; 1980:151) in order to support the idea that emotion terms, whilst nonetheless having a referent, designate neither "inner feeling" nor "outward behaviour". According to Wittgenstein, both "the thoughts of happiness" and the behavioural expression of joy constitute joyful feeling. Where Armon-Jones takes issue with him is in his apparent emphasis on the latter aspect. She maintains it is possible to 'feel' an emotion whilst giving it no external expression whatsoever. All this requires is

that the agent entertain the relevant attitudes. Suppose I have for some time been hoping for promotion in my career. My boss tells me I have been selected for a newly-created senior position. What might my thoughts be on such an occasion? I believe I am good at my job and I evaluate my superiors' decision as indicating that others recognize my competence. I desire to hold a more responsible and demanding post. I am thus delighted (and moreover, proud). In this case, the attitudes identified above constitute my feelings of delight and pride. I can ascribe these emotions to myself purely on the basis of the content of my beliefs, judgements and desires, without needing to demonstrate my delight even with a smile. There is thus a distinction between emotions which are 'overtly expressed' and those which are 'covertly entertained' (Armon-Jones op cit:48). Moreover, my delight having thus been shown to consist in my possessing the relevant attitudes, there is no need to postulate the existence of an inner quale to which my delight refers.

3.4.3.ii Physiological response

Thus far, the constructionist argument that neither an inner quale nor any kind of outward behaviour are themselves necessary for the attribution of emotion feeling, has been outlined. Returning to the persistent idea that some physiological disturbance or bodily feeling is intrinsic to the experience of a 'felt' emotion, a similar argument is made.

Just as in the example above, my feeling delighted did not require me to express my delight, so too is it possible that I did not find my heart beating faster, tremble, feel warm or 'glowing', etc.

on hearing the news of my promotion (all of which physical responses are commonly associated with delight, joy, happiness etc. - cf Wallbott and Scherer 1988)[3].

3.4.3.iii Intensity of emotional experience

It might be objected that where such responses are lacking, the individual concerned is not actually feeling the alleged emotion (cf Perkins op cit). Against such an objection, constructionists would argue that whether or not a physical response features in an emotional experience depends on the intensity of that experience. (There are degrees of emotional feeling; one can be extremely happy ['euphoric'] or merely mildly pleased.) It might also be argued that physiological factors are more typical in 'acute episodes' of emotion than in 'chronic emotional states'. Thus, the best man at a wedding reception, the moment he discovers he has forgotten his speech, may well blush, stammer etc. in embarrassment, whereas someone with an enduring sense of social anxiety, while experiencing the same 'symptoms' when in company, will nonetheless be relatively free of physiological disturbances most of the time (albeit displaying certain non-physical tendencies, such as avoidance etc).

In essence, the objection referred to above implies that only an intensely-experienced emotion

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[3] Indeed, cross-cultural studies of emotion indicate that cultures differ in the degree of attention (if any) given to physiological responses and the frequency with which they are mentioned in reports of emotional experience (cf Mesquita and Frijda op cit:190). This appears to support the claim that such responses are not necessary components of an emotion.

qualifies as a 'felt' emotion. But constructionists maintain that

> "'being intensely felt' is not a defining feature of emotion feeling." (Armon-Jones op cit 51)

Nor is it even necessarily true that intensely-felt emotions always involve a physical response. For an emotion to be described as 'intense', all that is required is that the attitudes involved are sufficiently powerful: the beliefs, judgements and desires must be clear and occurrent, genuine, firmly held and they must

> "greatly or totally preoccupy the agent's attention" (ibid:49).

3.4.3.iv Summary

The following thus summarizes the constructionist perspective on the constitution of emotion feeling:

a) The expression of an emotion is not necessary for its experience;

b) Emotions can be characterized in terms of attitudes ("thoughts", i.e. beliefs, judgements, desires), without reference to an inner quale;

c) A physiological response is not a necessary feature of an emotional experience;

d) It is the intensity of an emotion which influences the degree of physiological response involved (but intensity of emotional experience still need not involve the latter, so long as the relevant attitudes are "vivid", "serious" and "consuming" [ibid]), and a non-intense emotion is still an emotion;

e) An 'acute episode' of any emotion is more likely to involve a physical response, whereas a 'chronic state' of an emotion is less likely to involve such a response.

3.5 The cultural pre- and proscription of emotions and the sociocultural functions of emotions

The constructionist claim that cultures demand that certain emotions be felt by their members in given circumstances (and that conversely, the feeling and expression of other emotions are prohibited) is related to the claim that emotions have sociocultural functions.[4] There are two possible ways in which an emotion may be conceived of as socioculturally functional: firstly,

> " ... the emotion can be defined as intrinsically functional in that it depends for its existence upon its serving a social function." (Armon-Jones 1986b:61);

secondly:

> "... it is an aspect of the emotion that it serves a social function." (ibid).

Clearly, these represent a strong and a weaker version of the claim that emotions serve sociocultural functions. The former radical interpretation does not allow for any other explanation of an emotion's existence than a functional one; the latter does allow for such complementary explanations and may therefore be more acceptable. As Averill notes:

> "... it is true that most persons do not become emotional in order to fulfill some social obligation. ... any specific episode of anger, love, fear, hope, pride etc., may meet no social need. But if on the average, or over the long run, such emotional syndromes conform to social norms, then their net result will be functional within the social system." (1980:337).

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[4]This is distinguished from the idea that emotions have a function for the individual, e.g. survival, as was proposed by e.g. Darwin. Cf Averill:

> "... the emotions are not remnants of previously serviceable habits, as Darwin maintained. Rather, they are presently serviceable ..." (1980:337)

The functions of emotions suggested by constructionists are endorsement and maintenance of cultural systems of belief and value, regulation of socially undesirable behaviour and

> "the promotion of attitudes which reflect and endorse the interrelated religious, political, moral, aesthetic and social practices of a society." (ibid:57)[5]

It is because emotions have such functions that they are regulated by the culture, i.e. approved or disapproved, stipulated or forbidden, encouraged or discouraged.[6] The means by which their feeling and expression in the correct circumstances is ensured is through the process of 'emotional training', during which the requisite attitudes involved in emotions are learnt by members of a culture as they are generally inducted into the belief, value and norm systems of that culture (see subsection 3.3 above).

3.6 Responsibility for emotions.

The responsibility of persons for their emotions has been the subject of increasing debate amongst contemporary philosophers and other thinkers[7] during the past two decades and this debate is one which cannot be entered into in any depth in the current context. Nonetheless, since, as indicated above, responsibility for one's emotions is one of the major

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[5]In particular, the so-called 'moral' emotions (e.g. shame, guilt, compassion, anger) are so called because their feeling and expression in prescribed contexts serves to endorse the moral values inherent in those contexts (ibid).

[6]Cf the fuller discussion of emotion regulation in the 'cognitive process' model of emotions proposed by Mesquita & Frijda (1992) in subsection 6.2.1 below.

[7]cf e. g. Oakley 1992 (Chapter 4 passim); Sabini & Silver 1987; Sankowski 1975,1977)

implications of social constructionist theory, some limited consideration must be given to the arguments for its validity.

Clearly, the idea that individuals may be held accountable for their emotions is opposed to the Kantian view in which (as noted in the Introduction):

> "...The domain of the moral is the domain of the will expressed in action; it is the domain of that for which we are responsible. Emotions are beyond the will ..." (Sabini & Silver op cit:165).

As stated earlier, cognitive theories of emotion, which challenge the conception of emotions as

> "brute forces unconnected with higher mental functions" (ibid),

do allow a role for <u>reason</u> in emotion, but do not necessarily imply a similar role for <u>volition</u>. Yet, in contemporary philosophical thinking at least, the central moral notion of responsibility <u>does</u> involve such an idea. What must be established, therefore, is how, if "responsibility presupposes choice" (ibid:169), emotions (which traditionally are seen as involuntary and unchosen and as immune to influence by the will) can therefore be claimed by social constructionists to be related to responsibility. This sense of spontaneity cannot be denied, and must therefore be accounted for.

The main argument put forward by constructionists to explain how responsibility for emotions can be attributed is that despite the very real way in which, when experienced, they seem to overcome one, to be 'forces' to which one is passively subjected, this sense that emotions are beyond one's control is nothing more than an <u>interpretation</u> of one's behaviour (cf Averill 1980:312), which, moreover, is <u>learned</u> behaviour. The constructionist position might thus be

likened to a behaviourist view of emotions, i.e., they <u>are</u> 'learned responses' to given situations, which, once learned, are in effect 'conditioned reflexes' which individuals cannot avoid experiencing given the appropriate stimulus situation. This would explain the sense that the experience of emotion is involuntary. Having thus demonstrated that despite the <u>sense</u> of passivity, emotions do involve agent activity (in the form of interpretation), constructionists therefore claim that individuals may be held responsible for correctly or incorrectly interpreting the situation in line with the culturally dictated 'construal' and therefore for 'having' the appropriate emotion. However, there are difficulties with this, since this is not the same thing as asserting that one can choose to 'have' or not 'have' a particular emotion at any given time - the possibility of which is still not clear, given the impression of emotional spontaneity outlined above - and therefore be subject to "moral censure or rational criticism" (Armon-Jones 1986a:52) if one does not 'adopt' the required response.

It would seem, therefore, that the constructionist interpretation of responsibility for emotions must be limited to being responsible for learning the appropriate attitudes (and their largely 'automatic' application) and cannot reasonably be extended to include responsibility for moment to moment emotional experience. That is, the locus for the attribution of responsibility must shift from the point of emotional experience to the point at which appropriate emotion attitudes are learned.[8]

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[8]For other possible interpretations of emotional responsibility, cf the authors cited above (see footnote 7).

4. The implications of social constructionism for a cross-cultural analysis of shame.

In such an analysis, any theory of emotions (other than a thorough-going 'naturalism') will seek to identify constant and variable components of such a phenomenon. If the assumption is (as cognitive theories, and by extension, constructionism, maintain) that emotions can be characterized in terms of the beliefs which give rise to them, and the evaluative and appetitive attitudes involved, then what must be determined, if attempting to discover possible universal structural features of shame and apparently similar emotions, is whether the same beliefs etc. always and everywhere feature in such emotions.[9]

Moreover, given the importance accorded by constructionists to contextual factors in the constitution and experience of emotions, it is clear that in their view any attempt to subject 'shame' to cross-cultural analysis must take into account the wider beliefs and values of the societies in which the emotion is being studied.

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[9]However, one should bear in mind the implications of the polythetic or Wittgensteinian "family resemblances" classification of emotions, discussed in the Introduction. In terms of such a classification, it is not essential for all instances of e.g. shame and similar emotions to have (a) common feature(s) for them to be considered as members of a class which we might want to call 'shame phenomena'. Thus, for example, whereas one instance may involve 'a desire not to be seen' and 'a belief that one has failed to fulfil one's [self-imposed or socially required] expectations', and another may involve the latter and 'a desire to run away' and yet another may involve the latter and 'a belief that one's privacy has been invaded', this does not necessarily imply that such instances cannot all be considered as members of the class of 'shame phenomena' just because there is no single belief or desire involved in all of them.

The significance and value of a social constructionist perspective in this respect is thus that it requires the researcher not only to identify the attitudes characteristic of an emotion, but to explore the relationship between such attitudes and the wider belief and value 'network' of the society in which it features and to explain their nature in terms of these other sociocultural factors. Thus, where cultures vary in their beliefs concerning, for example, the self, and responsibility, and in their opinions as to the value of autonomy relative to that of solidarity with a broader social group, so may the complex of attitudes giving rise to and constituting 'shame' vary.

However, despite the fact that it allows for the possibility that 'shame' or any other emotion may be characterized differently cross-culturally, a social constructionist perspective does not foreclose on the alternative possibility that the same attitudes may be characteristic of the emotion in question in all cultures.[10] It does, though, have the advantage of not assuming a priori that this is the case, and of drawing attention to the need to recognize that such attitudes do not exist independently and autonomously, but are elements in an interrelated sociocultural 'system'.

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[10]Of course, this assumes (as noted in the Introduction) that the requisite equivalence between the emotions being studied can be established. This is an enduring methodological problem which has been identified by others (cf e.g. Mesquita and Frijda op cit:200; Solomon 1984:230-231).

5. Substantive studies: 'shame' in social context

Having elaborated the theoretical claims of social constructionism, in this section, the implications of such a perspective for the study of shame will be demonstrated. As noted in the Introduction, examples of a constructionist approach are provided predominantly by researchers in the fields of 'psychological anthropology'and 'cultural psychology'. However, another significant contribution to this kind of analysis of shame, from a different disciplinary perspective, pre-dates this recent interest by some forty years. In his "The Civilizing Process" (1939) Norbert Elias sought to demonstrate the correlation between feelings of shame and social structure. Where his study differs from the later anthropological analyses is in the relative attention paid to what may be termed the 'ethnophenomenology' of shame - the specific ways in which shame feeling is constituted by the relevant attitudes generated in particular cultural contexts (in the manner described in section 2.4 above). This was not really addressed by Elias.

Given both the chronological and theoretical primacy of Elias' examination of shame, it will be considered first, followed by the anthropological studies, which go further in attempting to penetrate the nature of the experiential aspect of shame.

5.1 ELIAS (1939)

Elias' primary objective is to show how both the social and 'personality' structures of a specific "figuration" which is both historically and geographically (more or less) continuous, gradually

change. In particular, he is concerned to show that there is

> "a very specific change in the feelings of shame and delicacy" (xiii)

as a society becomes more 'civilized' and as it tends towards increased "differentiation and integration" (222). Moreover, his work seeks to demonstrate that there is an intimate relation between <u>how</u> shame is experienced and the form of social structure; a relation which is neither coincidental nor causal but which derives from the nature of the relationship between 'the individual' and 'society' (to be examined below).

Elias sees the shift from the experience of shame as consciousness of an external, adverse judgement of oneself by others, to an internal, self-directed adverse judgement by the self, as associated with the division in contemporary social life between the public and the private domains. Hence, his characterization of shame in 'civilized' society as consequent on an internalization of sanctions so that they become "self-controls" (190) is implicitly Freudian and reflects the view of early anthropological 'culture and personality' theorists (e.g. Mead op cit; Benedict op cit) that the structure of society has a direct correlation with the structure of the personality:

> "... the social code of conduct so imprints itself in one form or another on the human being that it becomes a constituent element of his individual self. ... this element ... necessarily changes constantly with the social code of behavior and the structure of society. The pronounced division in the 'ego' or consciousness characteristic of man in our phase of civilization ... corresponds to the specific split in the behavior which civilized society demands of its members" (ibid)

[i.e. between that which is permitted in public and that which may only be done in private].

Further, the shift involved from the notion of shame as an appropriate emotion only in the company of certain specifically designated categories of 'others' (e.g. one's social superiors) (138) to that which generalizes the referents of shame so that it may, and indeed should, be experienced in given circumstances <u>even when alone</u>, is again explained by Elias as symptomatic of the shift from a society organized on principles of hierarchy to one with an egalitarian ideology and structure:

> "... First it becomes a distasteful offense to show oneself exposed in any way before those of higher or equal rank; with inferiors it can even be a sign of benevolence. Then, as all become socially more equal, it slowly becomes a general offense. <u>The social reference of shame and embarrassment recedes more and more from consciousness.</u>" (139; emphasis added)

Such a view also suggests that the structure of a particular society has implications for what 'kind' or aspect of shame is most salient in it. Thus, again in a society where hierarchy is an acknowledged and valued organizational principle, so-called 'status-shame' (elicited by deviations from the conduct expected of someone in a given social position) will be dominant.[11] Where all are ostensibly equal in status, however, (though not necessarily 'the same' in terms of ideals and aspirations), as is the case in individualistic 'western' society, so-called 'disgrace-shame' (associated by psychoanalysts and contemporary philosophers with failure to achieve

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[11](cf Deigh op cit:234-235)

one's own self-imposed standards of excellence) tends to predominate.

5.1.i. Theoretical approach

The assumptions concerning the relationship between 'individual' and 'society' (mentioned earlier) underlying the study must now be examined. In the Introduction to the 1968 edition of the work, Elias explicitly discusses these, in order to make clear what is only implicit in its original edition. In effect, this Introduction is a diatribe against both methodological individualism and what might be termed 'excessive sociologism' as impediments to understanding, or even attempting to investigate, the way in which changes in social structure can and do give rise to corresponding changes in 'personality structure'.

In its assumption that 'the individual' and 'society' are two independent and opposed (if 'interpenetrating') realities, modern social science has failed (Elias argues) to recognize that this conceptualization of these two phenomena is an illusion. The reality is rather that society is neither (a) an amalgam or sum of such autonomous entities (individuals) nor (b) a sui generis phenomenon existing outside and beyond individuals, but is in fact a "figuration" of interdependent beings; in short, neither 'society' nor 'individuals' exist in the sense in which they are generally understood (261). Furthermore, in addition to reconceptualizing societies thus, Elias criticizes the predominant sociological assumption that both 'individuals' and 'societies' possess static structures, arguing rather that these should be recognized as dynamic processes (225;229). Once 'the

individual' is thus seen as an element in a 'network', and the figuration in its entirety as a process not a state, it becomes clearer why one might expect to find (and does, according to Elias' empirical evidence) a close correspondence between forms of social organisation and personality/affect structure. (Hence his conclusion that the modern 'western' notion of shame as failure of one part of the ego to meet the standards and expectations of another, corresponds directly with the marked segregation of life into private and public spheres.)

There is a further implication of this view. In societies which possess a more explicit recognition of the genuine relationship between individual and society (though of course not necessarily expressing it in such terms), the way in which emotions 'work' or 'operate' will be understood (and consequently possibly experienced) in a very different way from that in western individualistic society. Further, 'our' commonsense and scientific notions of this split between individual and society explain in part why emotions, such as shame, are understood as generated and functioning within individuals rather than as having clearly social origins and referents.

The emphasis on demonstrating the relationship between social structure and personality on the one hand, and social structure and 'cases' of shame on the other, though interesting and important, leads to a neglect of the question as to what is actually experienced in a shame-eliciting situation. In not addressing this question, Elias presumably either assumes that irrespective of (a) what gives rise to shame and (b) before whom one should and does feel shame, shame itself is a universal and therefore unproblematic emotion or alternatively, considers that

such questions concerning the essential 'structure' of the emotion are less relevant, less interesting, or both. Since he does not explicitly state which position he takes, this must be left largely to speculation. However, he does give some indication of his position in the following passage on "the question of the limit of the transformability of the human personality":

> "Without doubt [the human personality] is bound to certain regularities that may be called 'natural'. The historical process modifies it within these limits. The degree to which human life and behavior can be molded by historical processes remains to be determined in detail ... natural and historical processes interact almost inseparably. The formation of feelings of shame and revulsion and advances in the threshold of delicacy are both at once natural and historical processes. <u>These forms of feeling are manifestations of human nature under specific social conditions.</u>" (159-60, emphasis added)

This passage suggests that Elias does have some conception of a 'natural' human <u>propensity</u> for shame but recognizes that this aspect of 'human nature' nonetheless manifests itself differently in different social conditions. Earlier, he has talked of

> "a very specific change in the feelings of shame and delicacy"

stating that

> "the standard of what society demands and prohibits changes; in conjunction with this, the threshold of socially instilled displeasure and fear moves." (xiii)

There can be no clearer statement than this that Elias considers that contextual factors significantly influence the nature of feelings. But what is actually meant by "an advance in the threshold of shame and revulsion"? Is he referring to the fact that as a society ('figuration') becomes 'more civilized', more things generate such feelings and

that therefore the capacity and tendency of people to have such feelings becomes greater? i.e., that the 'civilized' human personality is one which is more given to, and characterized by, a sense of shame and revulsion than the 'non-civilized' human personality? If so, the question is raised whether this increase in susceptibility to shame in turn affects the experience of shame[12]. There is, however, no attempt to answer such a question in the work; in short, the phenomenology of shame is simply not addressed.

The overall conclusion of the work is that in view of the interdependence of social, and individual psychological, structures, seen as intimately related, dynamic processes, the latter will vary as do the former.

5.2 Anthropology of shame

The recent trend to reconsider the emotion of shame (and guilt) can only be understood if the assumptions underlying earlier anthropological notions concerning these concepts are first reiterated.

The emphasis in earlier studies' views of shame and guilt (cf e.g. Mead op cit; Benedict op cit) was on their role as agents of 'social control' - that is, as means of ensuring that members of communities adhered to the norms of those communities. Thus, such studies were largely functional accounts[13] and one purpose of theirs was to categorize societies

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[12]cf Levy's (1984) notion of hyper- and hypocognized emotions, to be discussed below (see Chapter Three).

[13]It is interesting, in view of the discussion of the sociocultural functions of emotions above, that as early as this, the functional aspects of such emotions were explicitly recognized.

according to the apparent relative significance of either emotion. There is no evidence that at this time either shame or guilt were regarded as anything other than unproblematic, universally applicable concepts.

However, it was later recognized that such a dualistic categorization was too simplistic and thus inadequate to reflect the complexity of the reality in most societies. In particular, the idea that shame represented a response to external adverse judgements, whereas conversely, guilt represented a response to internalized sanctions was quickly repudiated.[14]

Despite such criticisms of the 'shame-culture/guilt culture' dichotomy, there has remained recognition that societies <u>do</u> differ in the extent to which one or other emotion appears to predominate; however, the analysis of such predominance has now become more sophisticated, relating it in particular to social organization (cf Lebra 1971).

Perhaps the most notable anthropologist to suggest the necessity of a constructionist approach (to the emotion of shame in particular) is Michelle Rosaldo. Her contention is that, more fundamental even than probable cross-cultural differences in emotions (due to primarily cultural factors), the conception of the 'self' is shaped by

> "the culture and organization of particular societies." (1983:136).[15]

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[14]cf Piers and Singer op cit; and above.

[15] Rosaldo's claim was of course not original; the idea that the self-concept varies not only cross-culturally but temporally has received considerable attention in a number of disciplines both before and contemporaneously (cf for example Carrithers, Collins and Lukes 1985; Geertz 1973; Gergen and Davis 1985;

The implications of this view for the study of emotions in general are considerable; however, given the apparently all-important role of the 'self' in shame, as its object (indicated by the accounts examined in Chapter One), it would appear to follow that this emotion, (and the way it 'works') will vary in accordance with variations in the self-concept (Rosaldo 1984:149).[16]

5.2.1. Culture and 'Self'

At this point, it is necessary to consider the idea that conceptions of self are culturally constituted.[17] It is not possible within the context of this study to reproduce the arguments concerning the ways in which selves (like emotions) may be socially constructed.[18] However, a selection of the many ethnographic examples attesting to differences in self-concept cross-culturally will be reviewed and the implications of these for shame will be considered.

Hallowell 1967; Heelas and Lock 1981; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Marsella, DeVos and Hsu 1985; Mauss 1985(1938); Shweder and Bourne 1984; Verhave and Van Hoorne 1984) and will be examined below.

[16]In addition, in terms of the general question of the relative significance of physiological and cultural factors in emotions, Rosaldo argued that shame (and guilt) should take priority as objects of research: "... we might do well to work <u>from</u> instances like these, where the relevance of culture is clear, <u>towards</u> cases where it is more problematic..." (1983:136 n.4)

[17] It is not in dispute that a certain sense of separateness from one's environment and other organisms, and of some kind of relatively continuous identity, appears to be a psychological and cultural universal (cf Hallowell 1955). It is in the <u>conceptualization</u> of the 'self' that differences are claimed.

[18]These may be found in e.g. Gergen 1977; Shweder & Miller 1985.

Before commencing with such a review, some considerations regarding the usage of the terms 'person', 'self' and 'identity' as analytical categories must be outlined.

In similar fashion to the differing interpretations given to 'emotion', 'affect' and 'sentiment' in various emotion theories, so are the above terms frequently used in different ways in different contexts, notably in ethnographies concerned with describing and explaining other-cultural concepts regarding ways of 'being-in-the-world/society'. Thus, since the application of such terms is not standard, a brief indication of how they are variously interpreted is necessary.

The distinction between 'person' and 'self' has traditionally been used to describe the social or objective human being or 'me' as opposed to the individual, subjectively-experiencing 'I' (cf Mauss op cit; Mead 1934).[19]

Obeyesekere (1990) has forcefully questioned the utility of employing the concept of 'self', as an analytical category for purposes of cross-cultural comparison, arguing that 'self' is a Western construct which cannot with validity be extrapolated to other cultures. The Western idea of such a self, (which is undeniably reified so that most 'western' individuals have the notion that this self is an enduring entity), is in all likelihood a secular 'hang-over' from the Christian notion of the eternal soul. In Obeyesekere's view:

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[19] But some have questioned even this distinction (cf Rosaldo 1984:146; Keeler 1983:161-162).

> "The self is something to be explained, rather than an explanation of something ..." (1990:248)

This idea is also expressed by Rosaldo:

> "For us, the attributes of individuals describe the core of what we really are ... But our concern with the individuals and with their hidden inner selves may well be features of <u>our</u> world of action and belief - itself to be explained and not assumed as the foundation for cross-cultural study." (1984:147, original emphasis)

Obeyesekere suggests that possibly 'identity' is a more useful term. Certainly, with regard to the implications for shame of the way in which one's sense of one's uniqueness is conceptualized, this may well be the most salient and universally applicable concept with which to work (cf Lynd 1958).

5.2.1.i The 'western' concept of self

For cross-cultural comparison of self-concepts to proceed, that which is generally held in the majority of Western European and American cultures must first be outlined.[20]

Perhaps the most succinct yet encyclopaedic characterization of the 'western' self-concept is provided by Geertz:

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[20]Most of the concepts of self to be considered below are indigenous accounts documented by anthropologists and deriving from cultures which are non-literate; there is thus an inherent inequality between such accounts and the 'western' self-concept outlined here, which is rather the product of academic reflection in various disciplines. Such inequality, while admittedly a problem, should not however preclude attempts to identify points of similarity and difference, although ideally an indigenous 'western' self-concept, arising from similar ethnographic research 'at home', would constitute a more valid item for purposes of comparison (cf Marcus and Fischer 1986: 138-139).

> "... a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background ..." (1975:48)

This 'self' has been elaborated more fully by e.g. Johnson (1985) and its key characteristics may be summarized as follows:

1. It

> "refers to a particular, individual person (or person-system) ..." (93)

2. It has a bipolar quality, being both subjective and objective (97); it is

> "... typically separated into ... <u>self-as-subject</u> ['I'] and <u>self-as-object</u>." ['me'] (93).

In addition, the objective aspect of the self consists of two elements:

> "... <u>self as a social object to others</u> and ... <u>self as a social (and psychological) object unto itself</u>." (ibid, original emphasis).

3. It includes the idea of <u>bodily self</u>.

4. It

> "refers to the characterization of a particular person persistent over time." (94);

i.e., it relates to one's sense of <u>personal identity</u>.

In addition to these external or objective features of the self, Johnson identifies the following qualities as typifying the subjective self:
a) it is given to an analytic mode of thinking; b) it is monotheistic; c) it is individualistic; d) it is materialistic and rationalistic. (113-128).

5.2.1.ii Person and self in Baining culture (Fajans 1983)

The Baining inhabit New Britain Island, Papua New Guinea. According to Fajans:

> "How persons perceive and act in each context is part of the continuous negotiation of self in Baining society. The margins of the self are not fixed ..." (171);

and:

> "The social actor is not a rigidly defined and delimited entity in the Baining world. The boundaries of the individual and the definition of the person are neither permanent nor immutable, but alter and adapt in specific contexts." (178)

The predominant continuum along which 'personhood' varies according to context is one between the 'relatively natural' and the 'relatively social' (ibid).[21] Thus, a person's 'sociality' varies according to such factors as, for example, age and social and spatial environment:

> "The measure of how social a person is is not consistent throughout all these contexts but rather is derived from the situation." (ibid)

5.2.1.iii The Javanese sense of self/status (Keeler 1983)

On Java, according to Keeler, the conception of an individual, monadic 'self' which, for purposes of

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[21]Fajans identifies this (albeit implicit) distinction between society and nature as the most salient one operative in Baining culture, which permeates every aspect of life. In addition, more value is attached to the social than the natural (170).

social interaction, plays a 'role' which is something distinct from that self[22], is absent.[23]

For Javanese, by contrast, 'selfhood' is <u>generated in and constituted by</u> interaction, and that 'selfhood' is synonymous with <u>status</u>. The latter is

> "... a crucial element in self-definition" (163).

While one has no formal status allocated to one, it is negotiated in encounters with others, largely by the kind of respectful manners (language, gestures etc.) one is able to engender in them (159). Additionally, the Javanese apparently do conceive of a measure of spiritual power - <u>kakuwatan batin</u> - attributable to individuals, and deriving from ascetic practices such as denial of one's own wishes in favour of those of others, control of impulses etc. This spiritual power is also seen as a source of one's status, but it is only manifest in relations with others (160).

So far as individual traits are concerned, while not denied, these are not seen as indicative of a self apart from one's socially-negotiated status - they are

> "[r]ather ... either so universal as to be presumed or so idiosyncratic as to be discounted." (161-162).

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[22]This is a familiar notion in certain areas of sociological discourse, i.e. symbolic interactionism, (cf e.g. Goffman 1959) and to some extent in 'western' commonsense ideas about 'selfhood'.

[23]Keeler is concerned to refute the claim by Geertz (1973) that persons on Bali (and by extension, Java) conceive of "a distance between actor and role, and so between self and social persona" (Keeler 1983:161); that they have "a private self which threatens to 'break through to dissolve [their] standardized public identity'" (Geertz op cit:402, cited in Keeler:ibid).

5.2.1.iv Tahitian ideas of self and identity (Levy 1973)

Responses to questions designed to elicit self-descriptions indicated to Levy that generally speaking, his informants had a strong sense of their uniqueness and difference from others. They did not spontaneously liken themselves to other members of their extended families, giving examples of resemblances only when explicitly asked to do so by the interviewer. However, the idea that the family group (feti'i ta'ata) has a number of common characteristics which are shared by all members is widespread:

> "The ascription of some characteristic such as high energy or effeminacy to a group of relatives is common in village description." (218-219)

However, the emphasis in labelling was on people's habits or customs (peu), i.e. their ways of behaving, rather than on personal qualities, and this way of labelling also took precedence over labels deriving from ethnic origin or 'blood'. (toto). In addition, despite the appearance that the Tahitians stress personal uniqueness, this is qualified by the fact that what characteristics are seen as possessed by individuals were not explained by informants as qualities of the individual as such, but of the individual in some specific stage of their development. Thus, they are not inherent and enduring 'personality' descriptions, but transient features typical of someone in a particular life-stage (221).

All the above remarks relate to the social identity of persons. In terms of the subjective 'self', this is seen as a 'given'; something which it is beyond the power of oneself to influence or change. Again, what changes might occur in the 'self' are the result of changes in life-stage and responsibility for

them is seen as occurring outside (222). Moreover, certain 'weaknesses' in the self are also conceived of as beyond personal control:

> "... they are simply conditions of the psyche, for which one is not responsible." (224)

Finally, the concept of an integrated, enduring 'self' also appears to be absent in indigenous Tahitian thought (as opposed to ideas influenced by the introduction of Christian doctrine about the 'soul'). The widespread belief that, on death, one is transformed into a tupapa'u (spirit or ghost which remains earthbound) does not involve the idea that this spirit has any relation to the self as it is experienced in life (228).

5.2.1.v Ifaluk notions of 'person' and 'self' (Lutz 1988)

For the Ifaluk of Micronesia, despite their distinction between 'human persons' (yaremat) and 'spirits' (yalus), within the former class there is not, as in the 'west', a clearly defined boundary between self and other:

> "The point at which the self stops and the other begins is neither fixed nor conceptualized as an impermeable wall." (88)

A concomitant of this is the idea that one person may (or indeed is often expected to) 'follow' the thought and behaviour of another; not in the sense of emulation but because their thought and behaviour are seen as one and the same. This does not exclude the individual will (tip-) as one of the sources of behaviour but generally, these are seen as

> "multiple and interpersonal and are not to be found exclusively in any independent or central part of the self." (ibid)

This interconnection between self and other is exemplified in the frequent linguistic use of the collective pronoun 'we' rather than 'I' (89).

Despite the closeness assumed between persons, differences are noted, although the number of "trait terms" employed to describe other people is limited and

> "...it is only in exceptional cases that people are consistently or permanently identified with particular trait terms." (111).

Traits are, however, seen as "enduring characteristics". Nonetheless:

> "... they are not the private property of the self. Rather, they explicitly link characteristics of persons to situational and social-moral considerations." (ibid)

Thus, such terms are used primarily to explain behaviour rather than individuals, and further, such usage only occurs when a social situational explanation of behaviour (the more usual practice) is not possible. By contrast, self-ascription of traits is apparently rare (90).

In terms of the sense of 'self', the idea of introspection for its own sake is alien to the Ifaluk. They do not conceive of the possibility of

> "... know[ing] oneself outside the moral and social constraints that sometimes make introspection necessary." (91).

The 'self' is seen as unified, there being no cultural distinction between 'thought' and 'emotion'. The two terms identified by Lutz as being concerned with what might be construed as 'mental events' are <u>nunuwan</u> and <u>tip-</u> (see above). (Neither of these has the emotional neutrality that the English 'thought' or 'will' possesses in the western philosophical tradition [94].) Whilst they overlap, the former refers to

"<u>more socially standard personal processes</u>";

the latter to

> "those more individual or idiosyncratic (although not therefore of necessity antisocial or immoral)." (91-92, emphasis added).

5.2.1.vi The Pintupi aboriginal self-concept (Myers 1979)

The Pintupi are a Central Australian Aboriginal people. A key concept in their culture is that of walytja or broadly, 'relatedness'. According to Myers, this concept

> "asserts a relationship between oneself and persons, objects, or places; it recognizes as fundamental ... the identity extended to persons and things beyond the physical individual." (351)

As a result, aspects of the external world such as possessions, kin and/or ancestors are experienced as integral constituents of one's "interior subjectivity" or 'self' (ibid).

A corollary of this in Pintupi ethnopsychology is the idea that

> "an individual's internal states [are] extensively connected with a 'web' of significant others or with 'objects' that European observers would describe as external to the self" (350)

Consequently, one has an important capacity to be 'moved' by others. Indeed, Myers claims that

> "the Pintupi use of concepts of emotions frequently does not present an introspective view of a person's feelings." (347)

Rather, cultural aspects are emphasized, over experiences which are peculiar to individuals (348).

Thus, again, the Pintupi 'self-concept' contrasts with the familiar 'western' one outlined above.

5.2.1.vii Ilongot notions of 'person' and 'self' (Rosaldo 1984)

As noted above, according to Rosaldo the postulation of an enduring 'self' - as distinct from a 'persona' being 'presented' in interaction and behaviour - is the transformation of an element of 'western' ethnopsychology into a presumed psychological universal and one which has no relevant application to other cultures such as that of the Philippinean Ilongots, among whom she conducted extensive research:

> "...Ilongot hearts [rinawa] are not fixed entities that stand behind or underneath a public world where personhood is both affirmed and challenged. ... our notions of a constant 'I' - ... - are not found in tribal cultures in which kinship and identity are forever things to be negotiated in diverse contexts. ... And character is seen less as a product of one's nature or experience in life than of the situations in which the actor currently is found. ... Correspondingly, among Ilongots, personality descriptions are extremely rare ..." (146)

5.2.1.viii Summary

In the light of the preceding ethnographic examples, it appears that a major distinction between 'western' conceptions of 'self'/'individuality'/'identity' and more 'exotic' ones lies in the degree to which individual differences are emphasized or minimized. In all the cultures considered, routine descriptions of persons in terms of traits or characteristics are markedly rare or even absent. While idiosyncratic aspects of persons are apparently everywhere noted and accepted, their salience in defining those persons' identity is evidently less elsewhere than in 'western' culture. The emphasis is, rather, on ways of behaving/acting in specific situational contexts. Moreover, ideas about the

continuity of human persons with their surroundings (whether other human persons, such as kin or affines; material possessions, or 'the land'), are strikingly common.[24] This again contrasts starkly with 'our' very strong sense of the ontological separation of individuals both from other people and objects in the material world.

Finally, conceptions of 'self' are evidently more fluid and context-dependent in other cultures, differentiating them from 'our' tendency to conceive of the self as fixed, permanent, enduring and unchanging.

5.2.2 'Self' and 'shame'

What then are the possible implications of such differences in 'self'-concept for the conceptualization and experience of 'shame'? As noted previously, Rosaldo (1983,1984) is one of the original (and extreme) exemplars of the constructionist position with respect to such concepts. As such, her work, which focuses specifically and explicitly on the concept of 'shame' as experienced by the Ilongots of North Luzon, Philippines and which contrasts this with the 'western' understanding, will be taken as a paradigmatic example of the constructionist persuasion.

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[24]cf Levy op cit:213-214 n.2; Lutz op cit:94; Myers op cit:350-351 [citing Munn 1970]; Read 1955 (1967):206-207)

5.2.2.i Ilongot 'betang'[25] (Rosaldo 1983)

Rosaldo is not concerned to argue that the Ilongot do not have a concept of 'shame' which is in some ways similar to that with which 'westerners' are familiar, only that, in other (more fundamental and important) ways, their concept is significantly different (148). Thus, she concedes that the 'family' of terms in Ilongot which denote a set of concepts broadly equivalent to the English shame family, also

> "... embrac[e] notions of timidity, embarrassment, awe, obedience, and respect." (op cit:141).

and are experienced in certain contexts as restraining influences (much as fear of shame may sometimes be regarded as an inhibiting factor for westerners). However, on other occasions 'shame' feelings act as a stimulus (ibid:142,139).

The main difference Rosaldo identifies between the Ilongot concepts and our own, is that whereas shame is predominantly interpreted as an

> "affect[] designed to regulate a problematic inner self" (op cit:142),
>
> "'shame' for Ilongots is less concerned with the control of a presocial self than with a set of feelings that relate to the conflicting claims of hierarchy and 'sameness', or autonomy, in Ilongot social life." (ibid:139).

These predominant values of "co-operation, 'sameness' and autonomy" (141), grounded in kinship bonds, lead to the eruption of shame whenever they are

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[25]This term, and its derivatives, are apparently those which may be most closely translated as "shame, humility, respect"; "shameful, shy"; "to be ashamed, be shameful, humble"; "cause shame". However, other terms may be interchanged with these in certain contexts, such as kayub ('fear', e.g. of superiors); tu'ngan ('humility, respect, obedience') and 'ege' (connotations of 'awe') (op cit:141-142, n.10).

contravened, as in acts of selfishness or violence (ibid). In addition, whenever the ideal of parity between equals is threatened by the reality of hierarchy (as when "facts of weakness and social inferiority" (143) are presented), 'shame' potentially ensues.

Moreover, there are two different contexts in which 'shame' is manifested differently: in the first, it provides an impetus to 'achievement' (in Ilongot terms, that is, "displays of one's capacity and 'anger'[26]" [143]); in the second, it involves recognition of constraint in the sense of respect for others (145).[27] Rosaldo identifies these as corresponding in large part to the shame appropriate to youths and mature, established adults respectively (ibid).[28] The means by which the transition from one to the other is achieved is apparently the Ilongot practice of headhunting:

> "The heavy 'shame' of youth becomes, through raiding, something more like 'shame/humility/respect,' made possible by the realization of new poise and 'anger' in a boy who can accept his fellows' subsequent demands without fear of being vulnerable to 'shame'." (146).

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[26]The Ilongot concept of liget ("anger") is fully discussed in Rosaldo (1980) and not explicated in the paper currently cited.

[27]These two aspects of Ilongot 'shame' resonate somewhat with the distinction between 'disgrace-shame' and 'discretion-shame' to be discussed below in Chapter Three. Also, the idea that 'shame' is overcome by achievement, echoes the means by which shame is resolved according to the Rawlsian accounts considered in Chapter One.

[28]This idea that there are differences in 'shame' at different stages in the life cycle (and indeed, that shame itself may be appropriate at certain stages but not at others) is discussed elswhere. Cf also the consideration of Freud's evaluation of shame in Chapter Three below.

In summary, Rosaldo attributes what she sees as fundamental differences between 'western' shame and Ilongot 'shame' to differences in the moral orders within which each operates, and the 'selves' created therein. Thus, the Ilongot emphasis on equality, co-operation and the avoidance of imbalance results in a 'shame' which

> " ... orders relationships ... keeps anger from disrupting the cooperative bonds of kin ... [and] shap[es] a social space wherein a group of would-be equal peers can manage to make claims on one another without ... violating an interlocutor's autonomy." (149)

This is different from the 'shame' of the Japanese, for example (whose moral order emphasizes the occupation of status in a hierarchy - see Chapter Four below) and 'western' shame, which as already identified, functions to restrain "historically shaped, responsible but selfish selves" from conflict (ibid). It is, rather,

> "... concerned with selves defined within a moral system where relationships are shaped much less by hierarchies or histories, past desires or social claims, than by a present sense of balance and imbalance among would-be 'equivalent' adults." (150).

5.2.2.ii Javanese 'isin' (Keeler 1983)

The Javanese, it will be remembered, consider 'selfhood' and status to be synonymous. A major source of 'shame' for them is when one fails to command the respect from another which one's status should automatically oblige; when the expected deference is absent. The concept of isin is used to refer both to the fault of the other in not according the appropriate respect, and to the experience of the slighted individual. Thus, the former "'doesn't know isin'", while the latter feels isin (153). According to Keeler, this shared lexical term reflects the fact that 'selves' and statuses are interdependent on Java;

that "another's style can define one's own status" (ibid). Such status is primarily re-negotiated in every social encounter, despite some objective determinants such as wealth, age and education. The language and gestures used in such encounters are a major means by which status is defined and

> "if applied improperly, give rise to .. isin because they do not simply reflect status but also affect it." (ibid:159).[29]

That is, others' disrespect "signals the inadequacy of one's own status to compel people's deference." (ibid). This again contrasts with the view of shame outlined in Chapter One.

5.2.2.iii Pintupi 'kunta' (Myers 1979)

Like the Ilongot concept of 'shame' explicated by Rosaldo, the Pintupi concept of kunta also shares a number of connotations with that of 'western' shame, such as 'shame', 'embarrassment', 'shyness' and 'respect' (op cit:361). However, it can only be understood in conjunction with the concept of walytja ('relatedness') discussed above (subsection 5.2.1.vi), which as Myers states

> "emphasizes the shared goals of egalitarian, closely-cooperative kin." (362)

This dominant ideological value is reflected in kunta, which functions to ensure that the selves which Pintupi present in public show no evidence of

> "egotism, selfishness, individuality, or 'animality'."[30] (ibid).

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[29]There is a complex system of speech levels on Java (156) but low Javanese is confined to very early childhood, after which a child is expected to learn (without being specifically taught) the correct speech level appropriate to the person being addressed (in the first instance, his or her father and non-kin)

[30]cf Fajans (1983), Scheler (1957) and Schneider (1977) for similar accounts of the significance of shame in relation to our nature as animals.

However, despite its range of meaning, perhaps the dominant connotation of kunta is 'respect'. Thus, it is primarily an inhibitory affect, not in the sense (as Rosaldo identifies) of controlling individual desires or appetites, but rather in ensuring that Pintupi do not assert themselves over others (which would contravene the egalitarian ethic). This also explains its particular applicability

> "to formal or ceremonious occasions, to the etiquette of confronting elders, to the subject of sexual relations, to meeting strangers, and to highly structured social relationships" (362)

rather than with respect to kin or other familiar or intimate associates.

Kunta thus manifests itself in a number of contexts. It prevents Pintupi from speaking up in public meetings or from asking for food or hospitality from those with whom they are not closely associated (364-365); it also figures prominently where sexual matters are concerned, suppressing discussion of such topics, particularly reproduction - which is regarded as too similar to animal behaviour to be admitted as a human activity (ibid). Further, it implies respect for others' possessions, needs, desires and rights and constrains Pintupi from seeking personal advancement or wealth.

In summary,

> "Kunta as 'shame' and kunta as 'respect' are two sides of the same coin, in that showing 'respect' for someone by consulting that person's wishes, by not overstepping one's bounds, or by 'shyness' in stating claims, avoids embarrassment. 'Respect' or 'shyness' is often expressed by hesitation to speak out. Disrespect, ... is conversely, embarrassing. (365)

6. Conclusions

6.1 Critique of social constructionist emotion theory

It is clear from the foregoing that the primary purpose of a social constructionist perspective on the constitution of emotion is to counter the dominant traditional naturalist/essentialist/physiological view and its inherent limitations. Indeed, many of the arguments adduced in support of constructionism's claims do successfully demonstrate the significant influence of cultural factors in particular on emotional experience, which has either not been recognized or accorded sufficient weight in conventional accounts of emotion. Nonetheless, as in many radical expressions of a particular viewpoint intended as a corrective to an opposing similarly extremist position, the tendency is, in attempting to compensate for perceived deficiencies of that position, to similarly eliminate different yet still crucial aspects of the issue. In the case of constructionism, one of the dimensions of emotion which suffers this fate is the somatic dimension.

6.1.1 Emotion and the body

In seeking to show that culturally conditioned cognitions, not physiological perturbations, define emotion, constructionists effectively excise the body from the emotional equation.[31] Yet this emphasis on ideational factors belies and diminishes the importance of the way in which, in a very real sense, emotions <u>are</u> experienced as involving both body <u>and</u> mind:

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[31]In this respect they are not unlike the 'essentialists' considered in Chapter One, who similarly ignore this aspect of shame.

> "... purely cultural accounts [are unable] to encompass and make sense of emotion in lived existence." (Lyon 1995:253)[32]

6.1.2 Emotion and social structure

In addition, particularly in anthropology, the cultural constructionist perspective in emotion research is a legacy of the distinction and tension between cultural and social structural approaches (as exemplified in the historical difference between American and British anthropology in general).[33] Not only does according culture the master role in the constitution of emotion relegate the body to a minor, subsidiary and even dispensable role, as indicated above, it also ignores the significance of social-structural relations in such constitution.

Despite the recognition of the importance of social context in the study of emotion identified above (section 2.1), the subsequent focus of both the majority of constructionism's theoretical claims and indeed substantive anthropological studies of shame thus still tends to be on the cultural influences on emotion constitution. In many cases, the consideration of social relations or social structure is generally made only in connection with providing an ethnographic context in which such constitution

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[32]Attempts to successfully reconcile seemingly incompatible theoretical understanding and commonsense impressions in emotional experience may be found in Averill's (op cit) 'emotional syndrome' model, which explores how emotions can be conceived as amenable to rational control, yet simultaneously experienced as involuntary, thus involving notions of passivity (hence the term 'passions'). This important impression is given equally serious attention by Sabini and Silver (op cit) in their consideration of the relationship between emotions and responsibility.

[33]Lyon 1995:251-252.

occurs, rather than being explored as one potential factor in the genesis of emotion:

> "... the very basis of the relationship between patterns of social relations and patterns of experience and expression of emotion are not often explicitly examined." (Lyon 1995:258)[34] [35]

6.2 Alternative models of emotion constitution

It would appear that what is required, in order to furnish an account of emotional constitution and experience which is both more comprehensive and more reflective of reality than that which either the 'phenomenological' or the 'social constructionist' approaches to emotion are able to provide, is a model which recognizes that emotions are indeed constituted by a complex combination of multiple elements, yet which, rather than making prior assumptions as to the relative significance of these elements, seeks to determine this (and the degree to which such elements are constant or culturally variable), on the basis of empirical evidence. One such model is that which

> "views emotion in terms of a series of aspects or components that function in the relationship of the individual to his or her social and material environment." (Lyon 1995:257).

Examples of such a model include that of Scherer (1984) and Mesquita and Frijda (op cit), although as noted above, the latter explicitly interprets emotion as a predominantly cognitive process (although does

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[34] cf Mesquita and Frijda (1992:201): "... little attention ... [is] devoted to the role of the actual social environment on the course of an individual's emotions. That role probably is considerable and an important source of cultural differences in emotional phenomena. This subject deserves more attention in the future."

[35] Elias' study represents an exception to this generalization.

not exclude the body) and as such is subject to the general criticisms of any model which privileges one aspect over all the others.

6.2.1 The 'cognitive process' model of emotions

According to Mesquita and Frijda, emotional experience comprises the following seven component elements: a) antecedent events; b) event coding; c) appraisal; d) physiological reaction patterns; e) action readiness; f) emotional behaviour and g) regulation. These will now be explained in more detail, while the influence of sociocultural factors on all these elements, and the implications of such influence on the overall nature of any given emotion, will be considered below.

6.2.1 a) Antecedent events

This element of the emotional process is self-explanatory: it refers to the events which elicit an emotion. Different individuals and groups may be "emotionally sensitive" to different events, depending on the general character of the individual or group. (Mesquita & Frijda op cit:180)

6.2.1 b) Event coding

Antecedent events are categorized into a culturally recognized type:

> "Event coding implies the recognition of a particular, culturally shared meaning to events of that type." (ibid)[36]

Examples of an event type are insult, bereavement etc.

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[36]cf Armon Jones (op cit) on 'construals of situations'.

Clearly, events of themselves do not generally elicit emotions but only as coded, therefore events and event types can really only be distingished analytically. However, this distinction is important as it draws attention to the potential differences in coding by different individuals and groups according to cultural influences.

6.2.1 c) Appraisal

> "Events, or events as coded, are appraised with respect to their implications for the subject's well-being and his or her possibilities for coping with the event." (ibid)

The above three emotional elements function in close relation to one another:

> "Events are often coded in a particular way, and particular codings often entail particular ways of appraising." (ibid)

6.2.1 d) Physiological reaction patterns

Again, these are self-explanatory: they are the autonomic changes experienced in connection with an emotion (ibid).

6.2.1 e) Action readiness

Emotions involve typical changes in potential actions, e.g. the action readiness typical of fear is self-protection (ibid). Such action readiness may result in overt behaviour (see below).

6.2.1 f) Emotional behaviour

This comprises both expressive and instrumental behaviours. All individuals have a behavioural "repertoire"; which specific behaviours occur may be

subject to influence "by the availability and expected effectiveness" of those behaviours (ibid).

6.2.1 g) Regulation

> "Emotions are subject to regulation ... regulation can affect all emotion components ... regulation is determined by individual experiences and by sociocultural norms with respect to having and expressing the various emotions ..." (ibid, original emphasis)

Regulation of emotion may take the form either of suppression or positive encouragement or even obligation (cf Armon-Jones op cit).

6.2.1 h) Summary

> "Emotional experience ... reflects all of the components mentioned; differences and similarities in emotional experiences are best described as differences and similarities with respect to the patterns of these components." (Mesquita & Frijda op cit:180)

The above model thus precludes the comparison of one total emotion with another totality, but requires comparison between the constituent elements comprising an emotional experience.[37]

6.2.1.i Sociocultural influences on emotional components

According to Mesquita & Frijda, emotional components differ in their susceptibility to influence by sociocultural factors. Accordingly, there may be

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[37]It may be readily seen that this model of emotions thus also has an implicit affinity with the Wittgensteinian conception of "family resemblances" referred to in the Introduction and elsewhere.

both similarities and differences across cultures in all the components discussed.

6.2.1.i (a) Antecedent events

'Being seen defecating/having sexual intercourse' appears to be a cross-culturally similar antecedent event for shame (whereas 'being seen naked' is cross-culturally variable as a shame-eliciting event). Another example of a more or less universal emotional antecedent event (for grief) is bereavement. As such:

> "Certain major events appear to be prominent as emotion antecedents in most or all cultures" (ibid:182),

There are however many culture-specific antecedent events, which are related to correspondingly culture-specific living conditions (including social conditions) such as the physical environment, mode of subsistence, occupation etc. In addition, as indicated above:

> "Some of the observed differences suggest cross-cultural variations in sensitivity to certain events." (ibid:183).

6.2.1.i (b) Event coding

This emotional component "make[s] a strong contribution to cultural emotion specificity", since culturally different concerns give rise to differences in the content of event types (ibid:183). Shame again constitutes an example of a highly specific emotion (in this respect). Events are thus coded differently depending on "culturally formed expectations and situation definitions." (ibid:184).

In particular, Mesquita and Frijda identify what they term "focal" event types (ibid). These

> "... represent socially defined and shared concerns ... clear norms exist in the given culture on how to interpret such events and how to respond to them." (ibid, emphasis added).[38]

There are focal event types for shame in many cultures, but although shame is present in the West

> "... the eliciting situations are not focal ones ... They are less well defined, and they are not consistently categorized as shame situations." (ibid)

However,

> "... many cultures share distinction of a number of less tangible event types." (ibid:183)

Examples include injustice and insult (ibid).

6.2.1.i (c) Appraisal

Cultural influence on the appraisal of emotion event types is apparently considerable and results in either the lack of capacity for and/or avoidance of particular appraisals. The primary reason for this appears to be the cultural regulation to which emotional appraisal is subject.[39] Such regulation takes two major forms: the first is the proscription by cultural norms of the 'feeling' of certain emotions. In certain cultures, members may be unable to interpret a situation as warranting, for example, anger, (due to the cultural disvaluing of this emotion and its expression). Thus, if 'anger' is not 'allowed', the situation may be appraised so that a different emotion is elicited, such as 'sadness'.

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[38]Again, cf Armon Jones on the construal of situations and the 'prescriptive relation' between situations and emotional responses.

[39]This supports the social constructionist view (identified earlier) of emotions as pre- or proscribed by culture.

The second form of cultural regulation is 'reappraisal':

> "Certain groups may also avoid a particular mode of appraisal, say, that of the attribution of blame" (ibid:185)[40]

This can be achieved by rearranging the emphasis of an emotion-provoking situation so as to facilitate the experience of one emotion at the expense of another 'prohibited' or unacceptable one:[41]

> "Events sometimes are not appraised in the way that would follow from the nature of those events; they are reappraised so as to be less painful or more acceptable to the person." (ibid:188)[42]

Notwithstanding the influence attributed to culture by Mesquita & Frijda, they acknowledge that there may also be similarities in appraisals in respect of comparable emotions across cultures; however, they point out that such similarities may be the result of a form of tautology:

> "The agreement ... is not surprising, because emotion words are translated on the basis of, in part at least, such agreement." (ibid:186).

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[40]cf Metge (1986:33) on the Maori concept of whakamaa.

[41]This may apply to shame and guilt in 'western' culture. Due to the greater acceptability and positive valuation of guilt in 'our' culture, it is possible that events expected to elicit shame may in fact result in guilt feelings (cf Lewis' discussion of "bypassed shame" in Chapter One above. This may be an example of reappraisal due to the cultural emphasis on guilt rather than shame).

[42]This is a highly individualistic interpretation of the motivation for reappraisal which appears to contradict the claim for the cultural influence. Presumably it is possible that individuals might reappraise for personal reasons (though these are unlikely to be totally unaffected by culture).

6.2.1.i (d) Physiological reaction patterns

Although many of the studies reviewed by Mesquita & Frijda suggest that physiological reactions to different emotions are universal, some cultural differences have been observed (189). The major cultural influence identified relates to the degree of emphasis given to the somatic dimension in the conceptualization of emotion. The conclusion is that:

> "Cultural emotion models that include physiological symptoms are more likely to draw attention to these symptoms than do cultural models that do not refer to them." (ibid:189)

Thus, apparent cross-cultural differences in the physiology of emotions is unlikely to result from differences in actual physiological changes (although this has not been studied [ibid:190]) but to differential cultural emphases on their perception.

6.2.1.i (e) Behaviour

Whereas the evidence for the universality of facial and vocal expression of emotion is apparently convincing, there is still room for a degree of cultural influence on emotional behaviour. This posssibly relates

> "to different behavior repertoires, to differential availability of identical items in those repertoires, to differences in the degree to which the social environment provokes or prescribes particular behaviors, and to differential regulation of available behaviors." (ibid:195, emphasis added)

Thus, as in the case of the physiological component in emotion, while universal behaviour repertoires and patterns may exist, these are still subject to considerable modification and "inhibitory regulation" (198) by cultural requirements, for example, concerning appropriateness of behaviour in specific circumstances.

6.2.1.i (f) Regulation

Reference to this has already been made in a number of the above contexts.

6.2.1.i (g) Summary and conclusions

The influence of culture on many of the component elements of emotions, resulting in significant cross-cultural differences in those components, has been demonstrated. Of these:

> "Regulation processes probably are the most widely recognized source of historical as well as cultural variation in emotional phenomena ..." (ibid)

and manifest themselves particularly in relation to "the feeling and displaying of emotions in particular situations" (ibid:199). Event types also differ considerably cross-culturally, resulting in cross-cultural differences in appraisals. In particular, the "appraisal propensities" of different cultures are another source of variation, in all probability deriving from differential availability

> "... due to their frequency of occurrence in the social environment, or their embeddedness in, or conflict with, prevailing ideology." (ibid)[43]

Finally, the generation of emotional behaviour also varies cross-culturally, such differences being attributable "to differential availability of universal behavior modes" (ibid).

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[43]This is the element which social constructionists emphasize. However, emphasis on one element results in a distorted view of the whole, cf Averill (op cit).

6.3 The component elements of shame

It may be helpful at this point to consider the concept of shame outlined in Chapter One in terms of the above model.

6.3.1 Antecedent events/event coding

These are the situations giving rise to the experience of shame. As noted in Chapter One, they are myriad, and range from the more trivial (such as failure to observe conventions of dress, manners, etiquette etc.) to the more serious (such as moral transgression).

6.3.2 Appraisal

Shameful events are appraised in terms of typical beliefs, evaluations/judgements and desires (i.e. cognitions). Thus, (cf Taylor's structural account), a typical belief may be: "I have been seen/may be seen in an inappropriate light". The ensuing evaluation is: "I am a lesser person than I thought", accompanied by the desire to hide, disappear, run away, etc.

6.3.3 Physiological response (optional)

In the case of shame, typical autonomic changes would be blushing, raised temperature ('feeling hot'), increased heartrate, etc.

6.3.4 Action readiness and behaviour (including facial expression, vocal effects etc.)

The action readiness typically associated with shame is withdrawal (cf Ablamowicz op cit). This manifests itself in: averted eye-contact (i.e. looking away); quietness, hesitancy/stammering and

inarticulateness of speech. Later, shame may give rise to aggression (cf Epstein op cit) and/or contempt (cf Broucek op cit; Heller op cit; Wurmser op cit). These are closely associated with the reappraisal of shame-eliciting events so that the experienced emotion is rage/anger (cf Lewis op cit; Loughead 1992).

6.3.5 Regulation

Shame appears to be subject to cultural regulation primarily in that, as noted above (cf Lewis op cit, discussed in Chapter One and below in Chapter Three), its availability is suppressed due to its low cultural evaluation.

6.4 Emotions: universal or culture-specific?

One of the purposes of this Chapter and the preceding one has been to look at two opposing perspectives in the debate as to the universality or cultural specificity of emotions. It remains to consider, in the light of these two chapters, whether any (firm) conclusions may be drawn in respect of this question.

> As Mesquita & Frijda note,
>
> "The issue of the universal versus cultural nature of emotions does not allow satisfactory solution unless the findings from the different research traditions are integrated into an overall framework." (op cit:179)

By examining these findings in terms of the cognitive-process model of emotions outlined above, such integration is attempted.

The conclusion is that on the above view, it becomes impossible to speak of the universality or cultural specificity of an emotion in its entirety:

> "... global statements about cross-cultural universality of emotion, or about their [sic] cultural determination, are inappropriate." (op cit:198)

Rather, only the universality or cultural specificity of certain aspects of emotions can be assessed. However, given that, as Averill (1985:97) notes, differences in one or more of the constituent elements of an emotion may fundamentally change the overall character of that emotion, it would appear that some degree of cross-cultural difference may be claimed for many emotions, while assertions of universality would have to be restricted to emotions in which no cross-cultural variation in any of the component elements could be found.

Having explored contemporary understandings of shame in 'western' culture, and in particular, two major conflicting perspectives on the constitution of this emotion and concept and thus its nature and status in terms of universality or cultural specificity, attention will now be turned to the question of shame's salience and cultural evaluation.

SECTION B

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF SHAME IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL AND MORAL LIFE

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF SHAME

In this Chapter, attention moves from the question concerning what is understood by shame, to the role, if any, it plays in contemporary social and moral life and the related question as to the relative benefits and disadvantages of any such role. There are thus two 'debates', concerning i) the current significance and ii) the value of shame.

At this point, it is necessary to make an important distinction, which has not yet been explored in this study, between two different interpretations of shame. It was noted in Chapter One that in 'our' society, the most common interpretation of shame is that which views it as an emotion. However, in earlier periods another, complementary, interpretation was equally accepted. This may be termed the disposition towards or sense of shame (cf Schneider 1977:18-22). It is the latter which is most often seen as having ceased to play an active role, while a corresponding rise in its opposite, 'shamelessness', is identified. Nonetheless, there are also those who consider that the emotion of shame is no longer an important one for adults in our society.

Structure and method

This Chapter will be divided into three sections, in each of which, each of these "two faces of shame" (Schneider op cit) will be considered separately. In the first section, the question as to whether shame is still salient in late twentieth century 'western' society will be addressed. Perhaps inevitably, there are two opposing views on this. On the one hand, it

is claimed that shame has disappeared. On the other, it is claimed that the emotion of shame continues to be highly influential, yet the tendency is for it to be unacknowledged or denied. The views of representatives of each position will be examined, with the emphasis on attending to the empirical evidence for each.

In the second section, based on the premise that shame <u>is</u> still a significant element in our experience, the question is explored whether it should be eliminated or encouraged, and why, i.e., the respective arguments for the negative and positive value of shame are considered. In addition, the related debate as to the <u>moral</u> value of shame, and indeed, whether shame can in any way be conceived of as a moral concept, is examined.

The third section is concerned with summarizing and evaluating the various positions.

The subject matter of this Chapter again dictates that consideration of the works of various individual representatives of each side in each 'debate' will figure prominently, especially where a certain author makes a particularly significant contribution to such a debate. Comparisons and contrasts between these will be made where relevant. However, on some of the more general issues arising from such consideration, the approach will be more discursive, drawing on a selection of sources as appropriate.

SECTION 1: SHAME'S SIGNIFICANCE

1.1 The influence of Freud

As indicated in the Introduction, it is believed by some that the views of Freud on shame were to a considerable extent responsible for the lack of intellectual attention given to this concept. What is not clear is whether the influence of Freud has contributed to an alleged decline not only in the attention it has received in various intellectual disciplines but also in the actual experience of shame by individuals in society.

To present a detailed account and criticism of Freud's own writings on shame would require a degree of expertise and specialist knowledge of his general thought not possessed by the current author. In addition, in keeping with the general approach adopted throughout this study, reconsideration of 'classic' texts on shame which have already received substantial academic attention has been limited, to allow concentration on more contemporary and revisionary studies which may be less familiar, particularly to philosophers. As such, this section will be restricted to a consideration of the influence of Freud on the perception of, and attention given to, shame by subsequent contributors in the psychoanalytic tradition and beyond. To this end, a number of secondary sources will be drawn on.

A number of authorities are agreed that Freud's own attention to shame was limited and that his various ideas as to its origins, nature and value were inconsistent (cf Broucek op cit:11-12; Hazard 1969:262-263,267; Lansky op cit). Various possibilities have been put forward as reasons for Freud's general neglect of shame in favour of

concentration on anxiety and guilt. For example, according to Broucek, Freud's inattention to shame was not accidental but an inevitable consequence of the fact, noted by several writers (Mannoni 1982; Morrison 1989; Tomkins 1963), that shame issues were highly salient in Freud's own personal early development and personality (Broucek op cit:17).

In addition, Broucek speculates that the conformity of Freud's "circle of disciples" to his ideas rested on shame anxiety, and specifically the threat of expulsion from the group (cf Piers 1953). He sees this dependence of the psychoanalytic movement's solidarity on such shame anxiety as a further reason for shame's neglect by Freud and his successors (Broucek op cit:18).

Such reasons are necessarily speculative. Regardless of the relative plausibility of such interpretations, there is however a general consensus that Freud failed to retain shame as a central focus of concern[1] and that, given that Freudian theory has also largely become 'folk theory' in much of western culture[2], his omission in this respect led not only to the neglect of consideration of shame in psychoanalytic theory but also to a general cultural neglect of and disrespect for shame.[3] Freud's legacy

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[1]cf Lansky op cit:1077-1079.

[2]Thrane (op cit:140) refers to "... the incalculable cultural influence of Freud's teachings."; Broucek (op cit:148) refers to "The enormous influence of Freudian ideas on the artistic community, the intelligentsia, and the educated public in the first half of this century ...".

[3]But cf Lutz (1988:222) on the "dialectical relationship between academic and everyday thought" and the absence of "a one way structuring influence from social science to everyday thought". Cf also subsection 3.3.1 below on the factors influencing the

in terms of the evaluation of shame will be considered in more detail in subsection 2.1.ii below.

1.2 The disappearance of shame

Claims that shame, however it be interpreted, has 'disappeared' from contemporary life tend to originate from writers who are primarily concerned to argue that shame has a positive value which has been overlooked by the majority of contemporary thinkers. Whilst the question of shame's value will be discussed below, in Section Two, the concern of this subsection is to assess the validity of the above claim.

1.2.i The disappearance of the 'sense of shame'

As noted above, it is the contemporary absence of a sense of shame which is most often claimed (and lamented) by commentators. Perhaps the most notable of these is Schneider (op cit). Schneider classifies his approach as "philosophical anthropology" (op cit:x); however, even within the psychoanalytic field (traditionally concerned with the 'intrapsychic' role of shame the emotion), there have also been recent calls for a revival of this aspect of shame (cf Broucek op cit).

1.2.i.a) Schneider (1977)

One of the greatest achievements of Schneider's work is to retrieve the alternative interpretation of shame from near extinction and to distinguish it from that in common usage. By broadening the referents of his enquiry to include more than just the emotion of shame, Schneider achieves a more comprehensive and

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'fall and rise' of shame in 'our' culture.

adequate characterization of shame than many other twentieth century commentators on shame in psychology, anthropology and philosophy. Having done so, however, the emphasis from then on is on this interpretation, to the extent that the emotion of shame is given little attention. Nonetheless, in bringing out the distinction between the emotion of shame and other aspects which may be described as more 'dispositional', Schneider does alert one to the way in which shame may be differentially valued, according to which aspect is under discussion.

Schneider reminds the reader that whereas all the Indo-European languages have at least two words to express the idea of shame[4], English has only the one, which, as noted above, nowadays almost exclusively denotes the emotion (18). This lack of a specific term to convey the idea of something other than, yet related to, the emotion of shame coincides with the alleged demise of the unnamed attitude itself.

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[4]For example, the French terms are pudeur and honte; cf Lynd (op cit:24): "Pudeur ... is associated particularly with the covering up of sex; it is modesty, bashfulness ... Pudeur may keep one from an act ..."; "Honte adds to these disgrace, a loss of honour in the eyes of others ... honte may be felt after an act." Greek and Latin have even more lexical items to denote the variants of the family of shame phenomena: in the former, the most well known are aidos (reverence, awe, respect, shame) and aischyne (shame, dishonour) in addition to aeikes, entrope and elencheie; in the latter, pudor (the feeling of shame, modesty) is coupled with verecundia (shame, modesty, shyness, awe), and includes the less common macula and turpitudo (Schneider op cit:18,145 [notes 1, 2 & 4]). Lynd and Schneider are in disagreement as to the position with regard to German: Lynd identifies only one word connoting shame (Scham) (Lynd op cit:24), whereas Schneider mentions both this and Schande, the former most closely resembling modesty, the latter dishonour or disgrace (Schneider op cit:18,145 [note 3]).

What then is the 'sense of shame' and how does it differ from shame the emotion? Schneider expresses the distinction in terms of one between a forward-looking disposition, operating "as a positive restraining influence" (18) to prevent one from doing that which may provoke a retrospective feeling of disgrace. Thus, the sense of shame is equivalent to discretion, while the emotion of shame is equivalent to disgrace. Such a distinction does not, however, reflect the complexity of each "face of shame" and their interrelationship.

In previous eras in English society (e.g. the Victorian era), the sense of shame was a recognized, highly valued and powerful disposition or attitude. Its primary manifestation then was as modesty (which is probably the word in the English language which came closest to being a synonym for the sense of shame), particularly with respect to sexual matters (cf Ellis 1936).[5] However, this is by no means its sole application. The sense of shame may also work to protect one from the violation of one's privacy (Schneider op cit: chapter 5); to prevent exposure of the more 'animal' aspects of existence, such as eating and elimination (chapter 7); to afford a sense of dignity to the dead and dying (chapter 8) and to maintain an important reverence or respect in religious matters (chapter 10).

Schneider contends that there is a general belief in contemporary twentieth century society (most notably amongst social scientists - especially psychoanalysts and feminists) that shame is an

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[5] In current usage, however, the term 'modesty' has all but lost its earlier connotations, now being understood more as conveying "images of femininity, self-effacement, prudishness, and bourgeois inhibition." (Schneider op cit:146, n.8.)

essentially negative and repressive emotion/concept, hampering individual fulfilment, and that therefore it should be eliminated:

> "The contemporary estimate of shame is negative; shame and the realm of the private are perceived primarily as obstacles to be overcome, along with all oppressive forms and structures."(xiii)[6]

According to Schneider, the disappearance of shame is the legacy of

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[6]But cf Richards (op cit) who maintains that there is a desire amongst several moral philosophers for an 'enlightened morality' based on a sense of excellences and the associated emotion of shame, to replace a 'guilt morality'.

> "... the Enlightenment ideals of reason and individual autonomy ... The practical consequence of this ideal was a determination to remove shame from human experience in order to prove the point that reason could triumph over custom, tradition, and shame, and lead to human liberation." (1)

As noted above, it is Schneider's purpose to demonstrate that such a view is mistaken and misguided, since shame is in fact valuable. His arguments concerning what constitutes shame's positive value will be considered in Section Two below.

1.2.ii Disappearance of shame the emotion

Claims in the literature on the emotions of shame and guilt that shame has disappeared tend to be unsubstantiated by reference to empirical evidence, and appear rather to derive from the personal intuitions of individual writers. This again highlights the value which consideration of empirical research (such as that conducted by phenomenologists, e.g. Ablamowicz [op cit], and anthropologists, with their emphasis on ethnographic fieldwork) into the emotions actually experienced by people in their everyday lives would have in giving validity and authenticity to such claims. Furthermore, such generalized assertions fail to take into account possible differences in the experience of certain emotions between different sectors of the population (e.g. class and gender differences) and in different contexts (e.g. 'total institutions', c.f. Goffman 1961). Thus, while shame may apparently be an infrequent emotional occurrence among male academics in philosophy or social science[7], this does not necessarily imply that its experience is similarly

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[7]Although cf Ablamowicz's study of PhD students, cited in Chapter 1 above.

rare amongst, for example, infertile women, or members of the Armed Forces.

In addition, the frequency with which references to shame once occurred in literature is often cited as evidence of its erstwhile salience (cf Lynd 1958), with the implication that an apparent paucity of such references in modern texts is an indication that shame is indeed less relevant in contemporary life. However, in more than one recent novel (cf Fine 1994; Mackay 1992; Piercy 1995; Trollope 1989), shame-inducing situations and shame experiences are explicitly described. Similarly, in recent years there have been a number of newspaper headlines featuring the word 'shame'.[8] Such explicit public usage of shame terminology suggests that far from having ceased to feature in the lives of late twentieth century 'western' individuals, shame is in fact still very much 'alive and kicking".[9]

Finally, and notwithstanding the possible instances of shame given above, the idea that shame has all but 'disappeared' from the Western 'emotional repertoire' may derive from the apparent lack of

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[8]Both the incident in which Chancellor Lamont was discovered to have used a government credit card in an off-licence, and that in which the footballer Eric Cantona caused grievous bodily harm to a spectator at a match, gave rise to such headlines in the popular press, as did the conviction of a Bristol doctor on a charge of drug abuse.

[9]Usage of such expressions as 'it's a shame', 'for shame!' and 'you should be ashamed of yourself' is also still common. However, it is possible that these function more as exclamations denoting general and diffuse disapproval than as genuine indicators of a significant and meaningful conception of 'shame proper'.

explicit reports of it as a frequent element in many individuals' emotional experience.[10]

The debate as to whether shame actually has disappeared, or just become less visible in 'our' culture, strongly resonates with the contention of Levy (1984:219,227) that in every culture, certain emotions are "hyper-" or "hypocognized".[11]

Hypercognition refers to those emotions which constitute an important focus in emotional life and which consequently receive great cultural elaboration and "culturally provided schemata for interpreting and dealing with [them]." (ibid:219). Conversely, hypocognition refers to those emotions which receive a minimal degree of such cultural attention and schematization.[12]

The forms such hypocognition takes are multiple; they include linguistic aspects (cf Scheff 1990a:17). Thus, in 'our' culture, it may be that the feelings of shame, for example, are no longer described

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[10]This raises the question as to whether it is only those emotions which are overtly recognized and discussed which may be experienced, or whether it is possible to experience emotions without giving them such recognition. Cf Levy (1984:228): "I am not ... positing a simple Whorfian situation in which it is sufficient that the un-named cannot be thought."

[11]cf Mesquita and Frijda 1992:184-185 on the "focality" of certain emotion "event types". Which emotions come into which category is dependent on the degree of cultural <u>value</u> which attaches to those emotions, cf the social constructionist claim that there are cultural rules according to which certain emotions are prescribed or proscribed; see Chapter Two above.

[12]Examples of the former in Tahiti (the culture in which Levy's fieldwork experience engendered these notions) include 'anger' and 'shame'; examples of the latter include 'sadness' and 'guilt'.

specifically as such but translated into generalized terms such as anxiety, discomfort, awkwardness etc. (Scheff 1988:401).[13] In addition, as noted above, they include moral or ethical aspects, i.e. valuation.

Adoption of this 'hypocognition thesis' would thus imply that the 'disappearance' of shame referred to by some authorities is in fact an illusion; what in fact has happened is that (for reasons to be explored below) there is, rather, widespread cultural and individual denial of the emotion of shame.

Levy does not (in the paper cited) address the question as to why certain emotions are so emphasized or minimized; in particular, he does not consider possible historical variations in the differential emphasis on certain emotions.[14] However, if his theory is correct, it may be that shame, once a "commanding concept" in our society (Braithwaite 1989:viii) has gradually become hypocognized in favour of guilt, which is now hypercognized. Possible explanations for such a situation will be considered below.

1.3 The denial of the emotion of shame

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[13]Cf Levy (op cit:234, note 7, citing Silvan Tomkins [personal communication]): "... a distinction has to be made between culturally induced hypocognition and the cultural mislabeling of an emotion. Both the cultural nonrecognition of the relational causes of an emotional feeling and a set of substitute explanations, which may or may not be elaborated, are aspects of the same stance toward the emotion-generating situation, namely, denial."

[14]cf Harre & Finlay Jones (1986) on "Emotion Talk Across Times".

Lynd was one of the earliest to observe the atrophy of the use of shame terminology:

> "The word shame - or talk of being ashamed of ourselves - does not occur as frequently in conversation today as it did, for example, in the conversations of Tolstoy's characters ... But it is doubtful whether the sense of shame has disappeared from actual experience to the extent that it has disappeared from our speech and from the forefront of our consciousness. It may be that the experience is no less common than at some other periods but that it is more elusive and that we are more loath to recognize it." (op cit:19)

Despite this observation, however, Lynd did not make any serious attempt to explain shame's apparent decline.

This idea that rather than having disappeared, shame is denied in our culture, and the possible reasons for its denial, is given the fullest exploration by two authorities from different disciplinary perspectives. Of these, the work of Lewis (1971), in the field of psychopathology and psychotherapy, is the earlier, and has been outlined in Chapter One above. The sociological theory of the denial of shame expounded by the other, Scheff (1990a) is based on, and is an extension of, Lewis's findings concerning the individual denial of shame.

1.3.i Lewis (1971)

A brief recapitulation of Lewis' views on the denial of shame is necessary here.

As noted in Chapter One above, Lewis's major discovery was that, although the emotion of shame was rarely, if ever, directly recognized or verbally reported as such by clients, their behaviour was

manifest evidence that they were indeed experiencing shame.

Lewis identified two variants of the 'denial' of shame in her clients (op cit:196-197): a) "overt, undifferentiated shame" and b) "bypassed shame".[15]

The first refers to shame which, whilst clearly being painfully experienced (as evidenced by behaviour) was nonetheless either mis- or un-named by the client:

> "In the first pattern of denial, shame affect is overt or available to consciousness but the person experiencing it either will not or cannot identify it." (Lewis op cit:196)

Moreover, it appears that in a situation in which a person simultaneously experiences guilt and shame (the former for some action or omission, the latter for thus failing to meet expectations), the guilt tends to dominate awareness, absorbing the shame feeling, however strong (ibid:197).

The second refers to what might be classified as shame "denial" proper, or the avoidance of the pain of shame (Scheff 1988:402). It involves 'diverting' or 'transforming' the potential emotional experience of shame into a different 'mode', so that while "antecedent events" (Mesquita and Frijda op cit) recounted by the client were such that it might be expected that the emotion aroused would be shame, the result was not shame but rather ideation which Lewis terms 'obsessive', that is,

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[15]These two aspects of the denial of shame, albeit individual denial, clearly correspond to Levy's points about cultural emotional mislabelling and "hypocognition" respectively (Levy op cit; see footnote 13 above).

> "hyperactive thought, speech, or actions" (Scheff op cit:402),

often specifically translated as guilt (Lewis 1971:233). Lewis calls this variant "bypassed" shame because

> "... the affective component of shame experience is what is bypassed." (ibid);

in other words, the expected emotion does not occur because its denial makes it unavailable (197).[16]

1.3.ii Scheff (1988;1990a)

Scheff interprets Lewis' findings as evidence of a wider, cultural denial of shame. He stresses shame's near-invisibility in our culture (1988:398-402) and argues that painful emotions, such as grief (or "distress-anguish" [Tomkins 1963]) and shame are defended against by disguising them as, or replacing them with, other emotions. Thus, distress or sadness is frequently transformed into anger; likewise, shame is transformed into, for example, rage and/or guilt.[17]

Where Scheff's work extends Lewis' is in its attempt to discover the reasons for the cultural and individual denial or avoidance of shame. Whereas the emphasis in psychological and psychoanalytical writings about shame is on the intrapsychic pain of its experience for the individual as the reason for its avoidance, Scheff, while not disputing this pain, explains shame's denial as symptomatic of a threat to, or actual disintegration of, social bonds.[18] He

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[16]This looks very much like an example of "reappraisal" as discussed by Mesquita & Frijda (op cit).

[17]Again, cf the discussion of "reappraisal" in Chapter Two above.

[18]Scheff contends that this notion of a social bond has itself not been fully analyzed (1990a).

considers that in our society, social bonds have become either threatened or actually severed as a result of the destruction of community caused by rapid industrialization and modernization (cf Tonnies' [1887] on the rise of Gesellschaft and the demise of Gemeinschaft). The cultural response to this situation is to deny the importance of the social bond and the associated emotions of pride and shame (seen as indicators of the state of such bonds, i.e. pride = intact bond; shame = threatened or severed bond: 1990a:15). Such denial takes the form of the adoption of the ideology of individualism, with its insistence on the individual's autonomy and self-sufficiency. This is thus a "defensive myth" (12), rationalizing an unavoidable situation and effectively 'making a virtue out of a necessity'.[19]

Thus, it may be seen that, whereas psycho-analytical interpretations of shame avoidance are instances of methodological individualism, Scheff's account of this phenomenon takes a sociological perspective, emphasizing the influence of wider sociocultural factors on the denial of shame.

SECTION 2: THE VALUE OF SHAME

As noted above, a number of authorities consider the current prevailing valuation of shame in both its guises to be a negative one (Ablamowicz op cit:32;

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[19]Schneider too identifies the rejection of shame as symptomatic of the rejection of "radical sociality" which prevails in Anglo-American culture: "Our age rejects shame because it rejects our bond with the Other." (op cit:135-136). He argues that it is our "doctrinaire individualism" which leads us to desire the excision of shame. Unlike Scheff, however, he does not explain the denial of such solidarity as something not freely chosen, but a necessary means of self-preservation in the face of genuine isolation from others as a result of social change.

Broucek op cit; Schneider op cit:xiii). Accordingly, the nature of this view of shame will be explored first, followed by an examination of the alternative position which emphasizes the unrecognized or unacknowledged positive aspects of shame and the sense of shame.

2.1 The negative value of shame

2.1.i The sense of shame

Again, Schneider is probably the authority who shows up most clearly the devaluation of the sense of shame by many twentieth century writers. This will be returned to after a brief consideration of Freud's influence on the evaluation of the emotion of shame.

2.1.ii The emotion of shame

As identified in subsection 1.1 above, Freud's neglect of shame is regarded as a major contributory factor in the overall neglect of shame in academic fields and its general diminishment in importance during a large part of this century. However, it is sometimes suggested that Freud's influence extends further. There is a general consensus among psychoanalysts that Freud viewed shame as primarily a negative concept and that this has coloured the perception and evaluation of shame not only by subsequent practitioners and theorists within the psychoanalytical tradition but also more widely in society as a whole.

However, the implication that Freud viewed shame purely negatively may be an oversimplification. In keeping with his various (apparently inconsistent) thoughts about shame, Freud's views as to the "utility" of shame (Hazard op cit:256-258) also appear

to vary depending on the context in which he discusses it.[20]

Hazard considers that Freud possibly viewed shame as both good and bad, in that at the appropriate phase of life (i.e.

> "up to the time of sexual maturity and the genital integration of the sexual instincts characteristic of adults" [ibid:263])

shame is beneficial, but after that time it is inappropriate and bad, since the mature character should be able to resist instinctual temptations without the aid of shame (ibid:264).

If shame is thus seen as an appropriate and beneficial force at certain stages of development, but its persistence into maturity as inappropriate and unwelcome, it thus becomes clearer why Freud appears to have primarily regarded it negatively.

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[20]Hazard identifies a number of ways in which, according to Freud, shame may be seen as positive and beneficial, both for the individual and for society. Firstly, in relation to sexuality (particularly in childhood prior to puberty, i.e. the "latency period"):"Shame functions, ... , to control instincts that are perverse and to hinder these [sic] that are unutilizable." (ibid:256). In addition, shame aids in the development of an integrated personality "... by restricting sexuality until such time as it is able to be directed towards its normal object - a mature person of the opposite sex." (ibid:257) and a normal character (understood as "the collection of ... permanent modifications of the ego, which we have acquired in the course of reaching maturity." [ibid:264]) - since shame is one of the mechanisms by which such modification is achieved.

The social value of shame is that being one of the means by which sexual inclinations are diverted from their natural fulfilment (i.e. "sublimated") into other channels, such as cultural creativity, it thus helps to ensure the preservation of civilization (ibid:258).

It is in relation to the psychoanalytical process itself that the idea that Freud regarded shame as negative is perhaps most justified. Indeed, Lansky begins his historical account of the role of shame in psychoanalytical theory with the recognition by Freud (in collaboration with his colleague Breuer) that in his clinical work with hysterical patients, shame was

> "... a psychical force ... [which] ... I have had to overcome ..." (Breuer & Freud 1893-1895:268-269, cited in Lansky op cit:1076).

As Lansky notes:

> "This view of shame (as a motive for defense) puts defense against painful awareness at the center of psychoanalysis. Repression, the generic word for defense at the time, is the expulsion from consciousness of any awareness that would evoke painful affect, the foremost of which is shame." (ibid)

Given the aim of psychoanalysis, namely the assistance of the healthy integrated functioning of the patient's ego, through the bringing to consciousness of that which is repressed, shame thus constitutes a barrier to its achievement and inevitably becomes something which is regarded as undesirable and harmful. It is thus not in dispute that in this respect, Freud viewed shame negatively, seeing it as a repressive force and an obstacle to the analytic process (Broucek op cit:12).[21] Later

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[21]It is important to note that shame is related to repression in two ways. Firstly, according to Freud, it functions as a <u>mechanism of</u> repression, i.e., as a "reaction-formation" or "mental dam" it is "one of the mechanisms used in th[e] denial ... of perverse and unusable instincts" (Hazard op cit:256) which are painful. Secondly, shame itself is <u>subject to</u> repression by individuals because shameful experiences are themselves painful. It is repressed shame to which writers such as Lewis (op cit) and Loughead (1992) refer, and which is seen by many contemporary therapists as the 'evil which must be routed' for the psychic health of the individual.

psychoanalysts have, until relatively recently, persisted in such a view (cf e.g. Loughead 1992) and in the belief that shame also interferes with the normal, healthy psychic functioning of an individual. In keeping with this, the current emphasis in psychoanalytical and counselling practice is thus on helping patients to rid themselves of so-called "toxic shame" (ibid).

2.2 The positive value of shame

2.2.i The sense of shame

According to Schneider, shame is valuable for two reasons. The first is that the capacity for shame is in part what constitutes our humanity:

> "Shame is the partner of value awareness; its very occurrence arises from the fact that we are valuing animals." (p.xiv - xv)

Also:

> "[Shame is] a universal and intrinsic aspect of human nature ... man possesses the faculty of shame; other animals do not; we may define man, therefore, as 'the animal capable of shame.'" (6, citing Soloviev, "The Justification of the Good", 1918 translation)

The second reason is that shame has a dimension which is either overlooked or not recognized by those who seek to eradicate shame, but which Schneider sees as a highly positive one.

As indicated before, Schneider's primary objective is to refute the negative valuation of shame. Thus, his conclusions reflect his claim for the positive value of shame. They are simple: shame (particularly the "sense of shame") works in a beneficial way (for the individual at least: Schneider has a disclaimer in his Preface to justify his concentration on

> "the sense of shame as it relates to the private and, in particular, on its role in protecting the private sphere from exposure." [xi]),

and we ignore or attempt to overcome it to our detriment.

It is this idea of the protective role of the sense of shame and the corresponding idea of a private realm of life and experience which requires protection, on which Schneider places perhaps the greatest, and most repeated emphasis throughout his work. Having identified the root meaning and associations of shame in covering and exposure (Chapter 4), he proceeds to argue that all cultures designate certain things as not for public 'display' (despite variations in what those things are):

> "There is [a] category of phenomena that are not negatively valued or seen as discredit-ing [as in the objects of "disgrace-shame"] but that arouse shame by the act of their mere exposure" (36);
>
> "... there are some matters that properly should not be displayed and call forth shame when they are." (37).

The sense of shame is what actively ensures that that which should not be exposed is indeed covered.

Schneider identifies three sub-categories of phenomena which require the protection of shame: firstly, those "whose display alters their basic character" (e.g. prayer, 'goodness'/charity, secret adverse knowledge); secondly, those that are "specially symbolic of an individual" (e.g. names, faces, the body and possessions) and finally, those

> "in which either the physical or emotional aspects of existence appear to pre-dominate" (43).

Of these, it is the latter to which Schneider pays most attention, devoting three chapters to a detailed

consideration of specific cases (i.e. sex, eating and elimination, and death) where the sense of shame functions to protect those private spheres which should not be violated. His concentration on this sub-category reflects a recognition (which others have also made) of the apparent connection between shame and beliefs concerning, and attitudes towards, the relationship of 'nature' to 'culture', 'body' to 'spirit' or 'animalitas' to 'humanitas'. Schneider calls this "the equivocal self-body relation" (49).

Earlier, he quotes Soloviev:

> "[Shame] 'determines man's ethical relation to his material nature. Man is ashamed of being dominated or ruled by it'" (6).

Schneider adds to this being "reduced" to it:

> "As symbol- and meaning-creating beings we experience a distinctive tension between being a body and yet transcending that body. We clothe our naked physical acts with these symbols and meanings. The body stripped of its human [symbolic] meanings is only a denuded part. The open display of bodily functions ... threatens the dignity of the individual, revealing an individual vulnerable to being reduced to his bodily existence, bound by necessity." (49)

This idea that shame is intimately linked to humanity's awareness of its uniquely ambivalent position (in terms of both being part of, yet also to some extent transcending, 'nature') is thus one of Schneider's central preoccupations, together with the related idea, referred to earlier, that shame is thus the distinguishing mark of the human.[22]

The category of the private, of which bodily functions are just one member, is Schneider's other main concern. Privacy (like shame) is, according to Schneider, undervalued in contemporary society:

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[22]This dimension of shame is a prominent feature of the 'metaphysical' shame accounts of e.g. Hegel and Scheler, to be explored more fully in Chapter 5 below.

> "Privacy ... is equated with uninvolvement with one's neighbor's needs ... Privacy is interpreted as either 'a fall from a primal condition of social communion or personal wholeness', or as an escape from social responsibilities. For the idealist, privacy deprives human beings of their essential communal nature. For the realist, private man is selfish, and must be restrained for the common good. In either view, privacy is immoral ... This view is widely held in our society. It is, however, an inadequate and shortsighted analysis of privacy." (41)

He proceeds to cite or paraphrase various authors who have demonstrated the value and <u>necessity</u> of privacy

> "both for the maintenance and the improvement of self and society" (ibid).

In particular, privacy is seen as

> "allow[ing] for backstage areas and remissive spaces where it is not always incumbent upon individuals to maintain their proper roles." (41:paraphrasing Merton 1957).

Privacy is also essential "for achieving certain aesthetic, scientific, and spiritual ends" and is "an operative principle" in personal relationships which "depend on an excluding condition" (42). His investigation of the private is, however, ultimately related to that of the value of shame for its protection.

<u>Evaluation</u>

What may be said about Schneider's preoccupations and the assumptions they embody? Firstly, in his treatment of shame and privacy, it is clear that Schneider is writing from a perspective which regards (and values) the individual as the fundamental entity, with rights and needs which demand and deserve protection. Therefore, despite his attempt (which is to be applauded) to incorporate anthropological and historical data in his investigation, he fails to

follow through the implications of doing so, which are that other-cultural concepts, beliefs and values (e.g. concerning the relation of individual to society) may be different and thus have an important bearing on how shame is conceived and 'works'.

The same criticism may be applied to his (very ethnocentric) notion of privacy. The assumption is that privacy is a universally relevant and important concept. Admittedly, Schneider allows that the content of 'the private' may vary cross-culturally (40), but he then goes on to define that content very specifically (43) without making it clear that he does not intend his definition to be considered a universal one. In addition, he does not take into account the fact that where privacy is either impractical, or not highly valued, (or both), the claim that shame plays this extensive, vital and specific role is possibly suspect. It must be conceded that he makes reference to the fact that the ancient Greeks regarded the private as

> "a diminished, if not degenerative, mode of existence" (42),

which was held in

> "contempt as the sphere of mere animal existence. ... the public was indisputably the more valued realm for the Greeks." (153, n.10).

However, he then proceeds with his insistence on the value of privacy, as though such a difference in view is insignificant or irrelevant. In particular, the idea that 'individuals' have separate 'roles' which may be 'shed' in private is, as extensive cross-cultural research has shown, (cf Chapter Two above), also highly ethnocentric and therefore suspect.

So far as the idea that shame is closely linked to a specific view of the animalitas/humanitas relationship is concerned, this too is open to

confirmation or refutation after empirical investigation, rather than capable of being stated unequivocally. While it is possible that peoples everywhere place a differential value on the 'natural' and the 'social/cultural' aspects of their existence, it cannot be automatically assumed that the latter is always favoured over the former. It is even possible that this dualistic conception is absent in some cultures, which would have important implications for Schneider's (and others') claims. It is interesting, however, that the Greek view just referred to resonates with this disvaluing of the "animal", as do the beliefs of the Baining of Papua New Guinea (c.f. Fajans 1983). However, if one wishes to claim a major association between such views and the function of shame, it is important to investigate just what those views actually are.

The main weaknesses of Schneider's study are inherent in his potentially invalid assumptions, already discussed. However, since he is arguing for the value of shame in 'our' society, it may be argued that it is legitimate only to concern himself with how it relates to 'our'notions of the individual, privacy, etc. (although it is suspect to introduce partial evidence from other cultures intended to support his claims and then generalize about shame on the basis of his own cultural presuppositions).

A major strength of Schneider's work is his incorporation of material concerning shame in other cultures (albeit in a limited way and notwithstanding the criticisms already made of his shortcomings concerning his method of dealing with cross-cultural data). This has the effect of showing that current conceptualizations and analyses of shame are too narrow, and restrictive of a full understanding.

In addition, by paying careful attention to specific cases of shame (in his treatment of various bodily functions), Schneider demonstrates his recognition of the significance of these for an appreciation of the value and function of shame.

Thus, Schneider's study makes an important and valuable contribution to the understanding of shame, despite its normative position which necessarily leads to an emphasis on the positive dimension (which may in itself be a valuable corrective, given the one-sided nature of other treatments of the subject).
In addition, in opening up questions such as 'what is shame?'; 'what 'kind' of shame is prevalent in a society (and why)?'; and 'what has shame meant/does shame mean in other historical periods/cultures?' - Schneider's work is of immense value.

2.2.ii The positive value of shame the emotion

The view of shame examined in section 2.1.ii above is, as various commentators have noted, now so pervasive that the idea that shame could have a beneficial aspect is almost impossible for many people to conceive. Nonetheless, a number of researchers have independently identified that shame in fact has an ambivalent nature (cf Tomkins 1967:137), the apparently overwhelming negative aspect being countered by an aspect which works in a way which is of value from both an individual and a social perspective. These two different perspectives will be examined in turn.

2.2.ii (a) The value of shame for the individual

Not surprisingly, despite his emphasis on the value of the sense of shame, Schneider also considers

shame the emotion to have its (albeit overlooked) positive aspect. He points out, following Tomkins (op cit), that although

> "The immediate awareness in shame is often the sting of self-negation; a more sustained look reveals an underlying core of positive belief and self-valuation." (Schneider op cit:28)

Thus, shame is only possible if one still cares about oneself; even if one's actual self falls short of one's ideal self, that ideal self remains:

> "In shame, <u>the object one is alienated from, one also loves still</u>." (ibid, original emphasis)

This is in contrast to the case when one does <u>not</u> value oneself; then, contempt or disgust are the resulting emotions, not shame (27).

Ablamowicz also stresses the

> "[p]ositive potentials inherent in the shame experience" (1992:31),

noting that the respondents in her empirical study, whilst feeling keenly the painful, undermining elements of shame, also recognized the experience as ultimately "a learning experience"; a step in a self-improvement process and above all, a natural, inevitable, universal and humanizing condition (1984:110; 1992:41,46). Likewise, Lynd's study (op cit) on the role of shame in identity formation emphasizes this positive dimension:

> " ... it is possible that experiences of shame if confronted full in the face may throw an unexpected light on who one is and point the way toward who one may become. Fully faced, shame may become not primarily something to be covered, but a positive experience of revelation." (ibid:20)

<u>2.2.ii (b) The social value of shame</u>

There are many who consider that the effectiveness of shame as a means of social control, well documented particularly in classical anthropological studies (cf Mead op cit; Benedict op cit), is itself an indication of its negative value. But, given the necessity of achieving widespread adherence to the prescribed norms and values of a society, the idea that shame, far from being a repressive means, is in fact a more benevolent and beneficial method than certain alternatives, is regaining popularity.

One notable protagonist of this view is the criminologist Braithwaite (op cit), whose work focuses on shaming and crime control. In contrast to punitive sanctions against offenders (such as imprisonment) which, he argues, stigmatize individuals and create a criminal 'master-class' and other undesirable subcultures, the practice of shaming, provided it is performed in such a way as to ensure the reintegration of the 'victim' into the community against which s/he has offended, achieves the desired end without any such negative 'side-effects'.

2.3 The moral value of shame

The preceding subsections have considered the positive individual and social benefits of shame. There remains, however, a further dimension of shame whose value is disputed by some philosophers. This concerns its status vis a vis morality. For some, the idea that shame has any connection with morality is suspect; others consider its moral significance and value to be substantial. It is necessary, therefore, first to establish on what basis claims for shame's moral dimension are made, before considering the

precise way(s) in which it is believed that shame operates in morality (and ethics).

2.3.1 Is shame a moral concept?

2.3.1.i Responsibility and morality

One authority who argues vehemently against the view that shame has a moral aspect is Lamb (op cit). Recall that in Chapter One, it was noted that Lamb's preoccupation is with the relationship between shame and responsibility, and that in common with other analysts of shame, he concludes that (unlike in the case of guilt) it is not a necessary condition of the experience of shame that an agent be, or even feel, responsible for whatever it is that gives rise to the emotion. Similarly, neither are the notions of blame, punishment and atonement, cognates of the notion of responsibility, relevant to the experience of shame (335-336). The implication of such conclusions, Lamb believes, is that shame is thus excluded from the sphere of morality, just because these concepts of individual agency and responsibility, blame etc., are fundamental elements of the latter:

> "... guilt has logical connections with a central moral notion, 'responsibility', that shame does not have."(342; original emphasis)

In addition:

> "Blame, punishment, and atonement are, formally and materially, notions and activities which are crucial to the operation of anything recognizable as the 'institution of morality' ... these notions and beliefs, all of them clearly crucial to the functioning of the moral enterprise, have no logically necessary role to play within the feeling of shame ..." (ibid)

Thus, Lamb's entire argument against the moral aspect of shame rests on this fundamental assumption that a necessary and indeed definitive condition of anything which may justifiably be called morality is that it

accords pride of place to the concept of responsibility.[23] It leads him to conclude that the idea of a 'shame-morality' (Morris op cit:3) is unintelligible. Rather, "a shame-based system of regulating behaviour" (Lamb op cit:345), while valid and indeed often highly effective, remains only that, and cannot be elevated to the status of 'morality' (346).

It is clear that Lamb's conception of morality is thoroughly grounded in Kantian notions; however, it is disputable whether such a conception is either accurate or adequate. It may be correct to exclude shame from matters moral where such a conception prevails; however, it seems questionable to evaluate shame's moral status in general on the basis of a particular view of morality. It should, rather, be recognized that whether shame is evaluated as moral or otherwise depends on the understanding of morality in relation to which it is being considered.

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[23]However, Lamb's conception of responsibility is also a restricted one. It refers only to <u>individual</u> responsibility and ignores other conceptions such as that of <u>collective</u> responsibility (cf Fauconnet 1920), which can take on a new form which is not necessarily incompatible with a modern 'liberal' ethic.
There are further reasons why Lamb dismisses shame as a 'moral' concept. These include the fact that the act of shaming (albeit with serious intentions) can be performed by such means as laughter and ridicule, seen by Lamb as inappropriate to the exclusively serious matter of morality (336-337; 343); moreover, according to Lamb, shaming does not

> "...necessarily induce in ... others beliefs about their moral responsibilities in any matter." (343)

In addition, in Lamb's schema, another condition of anything's being granted the status of 'moral' is that it satisfy conditions of <u>objectivity</u> (op cit:339). Nonetheless, such factors are apparently accorded less importance in moral matters than responsibility.

2.3.1.ii Alternative conceptions of morality

The opposing view, that shame is indeed a moral concept (if not the supreme moral concept) is expressed by a number of authorities[24], with the recognition that it goes hand in hand with a somewhat broader idea of what constitutes morality:

> "There is no reason to deny that shame in all its occurrences is a moral emotion, provided that morality is not thought of just in terms of adhering to or breaking moral rules, but is taken to include personal morality, a person's own view of how he ought to live and what he ought to be." (Taylor op cit:77)

Indeed, a 'virtue ethics' or morality of excellences demands shame as a corollary.[25]

2.3.2 Shame's positive moral value

Having established that shame may indeed be considered a moral concept/emotion (given an unrestricted definition of morality), it remains to examine the views of those who therefore argue for its moral value. Such views range from what may be termed the 'stronger', i.e., those which consider shame to be the primary motive for moral behaviour, to the 'weaker', which regard shame as important, but in conjunction with other factors.

Exponents of the 'stronger' view include Aldrich (op cit) and Thrane (op cit). To the question as to what motivates individuals to act morally, both give the answer 'because they would be ashamed not to'.

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[24]Aldrich 1939; Heller op cit; Rawls op cit; Richards op cit; Thrane op cit.

[25]The views of certain earlier philosophers on the relationship between shame and morality will be considered in Chapter 5 below.

For Aldrich, it is neither convention nor custom, nor the existence of self-evident axioms or maxims of conduct, nor the anticipation of consequences (op cit:58-59) which operate to guide our conduct, but conscience (the meaning of which, for Aldrich, is not the conventional one, but is itself the feeling of shame [op cit:59]). His position is thus in effect a tautology; since he <u>equates</u> shame with morality -

> "It is an attendant shame only which gives to actions their peculiar moral quality... where there is no shame there is only nonmoral conduct ..." (op cit:60)

- it is not possible that there could be any other motivation for moral behaviour.[26]

Aldrich's reasons for according shame the privileged position of being the foundation of morality are that conventions, for example, can, in certain circumstances, change their character and assume a different value from usual. Thus, lying or stealing, conventionally disapproved, may be considered a right action or even a duty when some greater moral principle is at stake (64). By contrast, one's capacity to feel shame is a reliable guide to conduct and not subject to such variation.

Likewise, Thrane considers that

> "moral feelings ... are the only sure control on the moral behavior of men." (op cit:139)[27]

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[26]This of course is not to say that there are not other motives for behaviour, only that such other motives are nonmoral - and indeed that much of the time, they outweigh the shame-motive (76; cf Thrane op cit:159).

[27]This echoes the view of Hume that passions generate the motivational source of the virtues (including the artificial virtue of justice) [1957:102-3], and stands in direct contrast to the Rawlsian concept of 'reflective equilibrium' and the belief that emotion 'clouds judgement'.

However, of shame and guilt, it is the former which Thrane considers

> "... the only truly moral motivation." (ibid)

This is because to act from fear of consequences (cf Aldrich, above) - whether external punishment, or internal, such as guilt feelings - is

> "cowardice in the face of the 'bite of conscience'."

and

> "Those who merely dread their punishing conscience do not appear to love virtue." (Thrane op cit:157-158)

Whereas those who are motivated by shame have a sense of their own worth and thus also of honour (ibid).

Heller (op cit), agrees with both Aldrich and Thrane that shame is

> "... the moral feeling <u>par excellence</u> ..." (6)

- 'moral' because

> "it is a response of approbation or disapprobation" (ibid).

This is despite the fact that, as most commentators are at pains to point out,

> "... we often respond with shame to types of disapproval which we do not consider to be related to moral issues." (ibid:6-7).

She also considers it to be the only innate moral feeling (6).[28]

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[28]According to Heller, affects are "empirical human universals, inborn in every healthy specimen of our species ... not acquired but 'natural' feeling-responses to fairly complex structures of stimuli." (1985:5) What is important to note is that, of all the 'affects' she identifies, shame is singled out as being the only one which "cannot be conceived of <u>prior</u> to culture." (ibid) This makes it unclear why she therefore classifies it as an affect rather than an emotion. Heller's distinction between affects and emotions is one which cannot be explored here, but cf her "A Theory of Feelings" (1979).

Despite her view that shame is a more fundamental moral feeling than conscience (Heller's substitute for guilt in her typology) (5)[29], she nonetheless recognizes that it cannot, unless certain conditions prevail, be the sole means of moral regulation. Instead, it must be supplemented (but not replaced) by conscience.

Heller elaborates a complex typology of conscience and its role in ethical regulation, comprising three major categories with ten subdivisions, which cannot be reproduced here. However, the type of conscience involved is extremely important, because according to Heller, when over-dependence on one particular type occurs, the "pillars of that same regulation" are eroded (2). By this she means that far from eliminating external authority, new external authority is created, which, unlike that it replaces, is <u>irrational</u>, not <u>prerational</u>. The purpose of her argument is thus to show that a reliance on conscience as "the <u>sole</u> arbiter in practical decisions"(45, emphasis added) - i.e., the Enlightenment ideal, embraced by Kant, for example, of human autonomy and the replacement of God by conscience, leading to "the moral perfection of

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[29]"...shame and guilt cannot sensibly be related to the same <u>genus proximum</u>. Guilt is the perpetuation of either shame or the pangs of conscience; it is the consciousness of a moral debt which has to be repaid."(2) [cf Lebra 1971]. Shame and conscience are differentiated, however, by reference to the <u>authority</u> involved in each. Following Freud's distinction between two types of guilt - one concerned with the fear of external authority, the other with the fear of internal authority - Heller notes that external authority is social custom, while internal authority is practical reason, this being the tool employed, where heterogeneity of norms has developed, to select between alternative norms potentially applicable to apparently similar situations. Conscience, therefore, is "the voice of practical reason" (27).

humankind" [17]) - far from increasing individual autonomy, in fact extinguishes it.

Instead, Heller maintains that conscience as "the ultimate arbiter of human conduct" (44, emphasis added) is an ideal to be desired, since there remains a role for external authority and thus shame.

SECTION 3 SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

This Chapter has examined both the question as to whether shame has disappeared from contemporary social and moral life or merely 'gone underground', and the related question as to its individual, social and moral value.

The prevailing contemporary view, that both the sense of shame and shame the emotion are unnecessary, undesirable and illiberal concepts, has been examined, together with the countering view that closer examination of shame reveals a positive dimension which renders it beneficial and ultimately, an experience which is not to be avoided.

While individual criticism of the various authorities involved in the debates examined has already been made, this Section will appraise these debates in general.

3.1 The absence of the sense of shame

The idea that contemporary ('western') society is 'shameless', in that it is generally accepted that very few areas of life are nowadays regarded as 'taboo' and exempt from public exposure, examination and discussion, does not seem open to serious dispute. Perhaps the most obvious example is that of sexuality,

despite the apparently paradoxical situation whereby on the one hand it is considered permissible to openly discuss matters of sex, yet on the other, such matters are deemed to belong to some 'private domain' (in liberal terms, i.e. that there is an area where what individuals do is their own affair, so long as no harm is done to others).

However, the main difficulty with any <u>generalized</u> view of the morality of a culture is that it fails to recognize the subtle differences which may pertain to various subcultures. As noted above, empirical investigation into the norms governing the lives of specific groups of individuals may reveal that the 'sense of shame', or even 'modesty', persists in the face of its broader cultural devaluation. This criticism illustrates the possibility that purely intellectual descriptions of a culture's moral standards may in fact represent an attempt by an elite minority in society to impose an ideal or utopian morality on the culture, i.e., there may be a division between what is 'legislated' by 'high' culture and what is actually empirically experienced by 'low' or 'folk' culture. However, it is not clear by what process such an elite could implement such an imposition.

<u>3.2. Freud</u>

There seems little doubt, too, that misunderstanding of, or insufficient careful attention to, certain of Freud's views on shame <u>have</u> contributed to its neglect. As noted above, however, the ensuing cultural 'conspiracy of silence' surrounding shame has not, as the work of Lewis (op cit) appears to demonstrate, resulted in its elimination from personal

experience, even if it has become disguised.[30] As already noted, in a sense, Lewis 'rediscovered' shame for psychoanalysis. Indeed, implicit in most recent psychoanalytical writings on shame is the idea that it is a common, almost inevitable feature of psychological life, even though the predominant evaluation of it is still as something to be overcome, if not removed entirely (cf Loughead op cit). This is in marked contrast to the apparent denial of the existence of shame evident in some other disciplines, which appears to be more an implication by omission. Thus, in their concentration on guilt, many twentieth century philosophers, for example, have implied that shame is no longer salient. Only those philosophers who have analyzed shame, overtly recognize its significance.

3.3. Devaluation and denial of shame

The argument that shame is culturally devalued and therefore denied in contemporary life, is, however, more convincing, again given the evidence which Lewis's work in particular constitutes. The Enlightenment ideals of reason and autonomy as replacements for irrational obedience to social custom, identified above, have clearly been embraced at least by intellectuals. This rejection of shame by, for example, Enlightenment intellectuals, Freudians and post-Freudians etc., and the ensuing "attempt to eradicate it" (cf Schneider op cit); the apparent gradual 'going underground' of shame (in

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[30]It is not altogether surprising that the discipline of psychoanalysis should place emphasis on the denial of shame; it is, after all, generally concerned with the 'unconscious', and what is 'hidden' and 'repressed'in the psyche. Nonetheless, this does not preclude the validity of the claim that shame is denied, which appears likely on the face of the evidence.

terms of cultural and individual denial, cf Levy, Lewis and Scheff), all point to the potential validity of the social constructionist argument that emotional experience <u>is</u> culturally constrained, and provides a good potential 'case study' of a specific emotion for 'testing' aspects of the constructionist thesis. Thus, the history of shame's cultural evaluation and its individual experience since the Enlightenment is an interesting one, which deserves a closer and more detailed examination than is possible within the scope of this study.[31] A limited degree of speculation is all that is possible.

3.3.1 The 'fall and rise' of shame in 'our' culture

Even a brief consideration of the view of shame within our own culture since the Enlightenment demonstrates the differential evaluation of this emotion and concept in various historical periods. Thus, as Schneider points out, in keeping with their ideals of reason and autonomy, Enlightenment intellectuals (and their successors) recognized the apparently limiting nature of shame and decided it should be removed. With the advent of the Victorian era, however, as evidenced in the works of Darwin (1965) and Ellis (op cit), an attempt was made to 'recover' shame. Its significance and influence, primarily in its manifestation as modesty, was considerable for a number of years, until, as indicated earlier in this Chapter, the influence of Freud apparently again encouraged a negative perspective on shame to prevail. Finally, in the current climate, we are once more being urged to

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[31]cf Harré and Finlay-Jones (op cit) on <u>accidie</u> and melancholy. Of course, Elias's study of the history of manners (op cit, see above) is concerned with just such a project; however, it could be further developed.

reconsider the positive value of shame and foster its utility in our lives. It can thus be seen that this cultural evaluation may well be a significant factor in the extent to which shame is both experienced and/or acknowledged. The possible relationship between such evaluation and changes in social organization and culture is, however, open to investigation. Candidates as potential explanations are multiple and vary across disciplines. Thus, the 'social bonds' theory of Scheff (op cit) in sociology; the 'cultural constructionist' perspective in anthropology; the rationalist, liberal and individualist ideology embraced in philosophy and the capitalist interpretation in economics (cf Broucek op cit:138-139) are all offered. What seems most plausible, however, is that the relationship between sociocultural conditions and individual emotional experience is not a simple, causal one, but a complex, dialectical intermeshing of various factors, which interact to create a climate in which shame is now valuable, now harmful. On this view (which owes much to that of Scheff), the explanation of the current state of affairs is that the situation 'on the ground', i.e. modernization and industrialization, occurs and creates a threat to social bonds; this threat gives rise to the rationalization of the situation in the ideology of individualism and denial of 'radical sociality' (cf Schneider op cit). Such an ideology devalues shame and demands that it be removed, leading both to its 'hypocognition' in the culture and its individual denial (cf Lewis), since its experience itself becomes shameful. Inevitably, such 'stages' are not sequential but neither do they occur simultaneously; rather, they overlap and react on each other.

3.4 Implications of the argument for shame's value

It is essential when discussing the valuation of shame - in particular the view that shame is a concept which should be retained and encouraged - to be absolutely clear as to what 'kind' of shame is being referred to, since it has already been noted that the various interpretations of shame (as an emotion or a disposition) result in differential evaluations, (moral or otherwise). Thus, to argue that we should restore shame to its former, culturally endorsed position of potency in our lives - if this also entails the retrieval of the lost feeling of disgrace felt by those who, through no personal fault of their own or through the mere contingent circumstances of their birth are (for example) physically imperfect or occupy a particular social position or fixed status - may be to implicitly endorse an illiberal perspective on shame which has no place in the humanistic ethic contemporary western society purports to embrace. The evaluation of shame cannot be divorced from this fundamental idea of respect for persons.

Bearing this in mind, the question as to shame's value is now considered.

3.4.1 Individual and social value of shame

It appears that from an individual point of view, a 'normal' or 'healthy' person can suffer experiences of shame and benefit from them, despite their initial negative reaction. It is when, through persistent and repeated shame-inducing episodes,[32] a person becomes shame-prone, so that s/he is in a more or less

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[32]cf e.g. Lansky op cit:1086-1088, on "the type of childhood trauma ... which leave[s] the traumatized person with what is often a lifelong legacy of shame."

permanent state of shame, that the latter becomes pathological (the emphasis on which is evident in earlier and many contemporary psychoanalytic writings, largely due to the nature of the discipline which is, ultimately, concerned with psychopathology). Thus, clarification of the distinction between what is 'good' and what is 'bad' shame (and in what contexts) is essential when deciding whether it should be retained or discouraged.

With respect to the social value of shame, it seems plausible that, given the need for some means of 'social control', "reintegrative" shame sanctions (judiciously applied) may be beneficial in a society such as 'ours'.[33] In addition, it may be that such shame is more potent and effective in complex, industrial societies than has previously been assumed, due to the multiplicity of potential 'audiences' to which an individual is exposed as a result of the segregation of roles which is typical of such societies (cf Braithwaite 1993:12-15).

3.4.2 Moral value of shame

As indicated earlier, the view that shame is not moral can only really be sustained in the context of a specific, narrow view of morality which, while it may be typical in late twentieth century (academic philosophical) opinion, is nonetheless not unanimously

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[33]Braithwaite (op cit) distinguishes between "reintegrative" and "stigmatizing" shaming . The former is effective since it shames the offending individual or group while retaining the bond between them and the community of which they are a part, which is restored once 'payment' for the breach (such as apology) has been made. By contrast, the latter is absolutely punitive; it makes an 'outcast' of the offender, who can no longer take their place in the community.

held. The calls for a restoration of an ethics which values personal qualities over obedience to rules (identified by Richards [op cit]) and which relies on shame as the stimulus to moral behaviour rather than fear of punishment, need not be illiberal, so long as the necessary precautions are taken to avoid the stigmatizing shame of status or defect referred to above.[34] This may be linked with the current revival and reconstruction of an ethics of virtue and the liberal-communitarian debate.

This exploration of the present position concerning the social and moral evaluation of shame concludes the first Part of this study, which has examined the dominant preoccupations of contemporary philosophers, social scientists and social theorists in relation to this concept and emotion. As indicated in the Introduction, the next Part will extend this exploration of shame by taking a cross-cultural perspective and considering the way 'shame' is interpreted elsewhere than in the Anglo-American tradition.

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[34]cf Chapter Six below, for further discussion of how problems of illiberality may possibly be transcended.

PART TWO

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

CHAPTER FOUR

SHAME ABROAD: OTHER-CULTURAL ACCOUNTS

1. Introduction

In this chapter, the work of anthropologists, psychologists and philosophers researching into aspects of the concept of 'shame' operative in other cultures will be considered. For this purpose, two major 'culture areas'[1], in which 'shame' has been identified as particularly salient, have been selected. They are: Japan and China and 'The Mediterranean'. In addition, the concept of whakamaa of the New Zealand Maori will receive attention, since, as Scheff notes, the work of Metge (op cit) constitutes probably "[t]he most detailed discussion of the shame lexicon of a traditional society ..." (1995b:1054).

1.1 Selection criteria

The choice of the above culture areas was made on the basis that there exists the greatest volume of available data (ethnographic and other) on 'shame' relating to them.

Although in recent years there has been a proliferation of individual accounts of shame-like concepts in a number of cultures,[2] all yielding interesting insights, it was felt that by

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[1]cf the discussion of the culture area concept in the Introduction.

[2]Cf e.g. Parish (1987); Strathern (1975); Valentine (1963).

concentrating on those cultures which have attracted the widest span of scholarly attention, a more comprehensive portrayal of such concepts could be achieved.[3] Such attention has come from diverse sources, representing a variety of theoretical perspectives within anthropology, psychology and philosophy. This variety of perspectives has a further, methodological implication, which is that rather than attempt to synthesize a number of accounts in order to present a definitive view or 'true picture' of 'shame' in any particular culture, it again seemed best to consider the work of individual authors separately.

Certain of the accounts to be considered here differ from those examined in Chapter Two in that, although related to another culture, they do not attempt to convey the indigenous understanding of the relevant 'shame' concept. Indeed, some scholars' studies have been excluded, on the grounds that they demonstrate uncritical application of some variant of the 'western' model of shame (and thus implicitly suggest probable conceptual equivalence).[4] Accordingly, only those which, by demonstrating unfamiliar and/or unusual features of 'shame', significantly broaden the 'western' understanding of this concept, have been included.[5] Thus, for example,

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[3]Metge's account is obviously an exception, but is included owing to the particularly valuable contribution to the clarification of the 'shame' concept of another culture which it represents.

[4]Despite its satisfaction of this general exclusion criterion, Ng's study (see subsection 2.4 below), is nonetheless included (see footnote 5 below).

[5]Ng's study (op cit) falls into this category, despite its potential rejection on the grounds discussed above.

explicitly psychoanalytical anthropological analyses have been rejected,[6] as have psychological studies employing methods such as factor analysis.[7]

Similarly, detailed consideration of the so-called 'classic' studies of Japanese and Ancient Greek 'shame' by, for example, Mead (op cit), Benedict (op cit), Adkins (1960) and Dodds (op cit), and to which many of the current authors refer, has also been omitted. If and when reference to anthropological research <u>is</u> made by philosophers writing about shame, it tends to be to such works. Thus, since one of the purposes of many contemporary (anthropological) accounts is often the revision or disputation of certain claims of such seminal works, it is hoped that by concentrating on more recent studies, similar revision of philosophical thinking about shame will be stimulated.

1.2 Structure

The various accounts, under their culture-area headings, will be critically examined first. Where relevant, any significant points of comparison or contrast between them will be made. Finally, they will be considered in relation to the concepts of 'shame' already outlined in the first Part of the study, particularly where their content appears to have implications for such questions as, for example, similarities between such emotions (or their elements) across cultures.

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[6]cf e.g. Epstein 1984, Nachman (op cit).

[7]cf e.g. Hashimoto and Shimizu (1988); Hong and Chiu (1992); Johnson et al (op cit).

2. JAPAN AND CHINA

The anthropological interest in shame in this culture area probably dates from the work of Benedict (op cit) on Japan. Her world-famous distinction between so-called 'shame-cultures' and 'guilt-cultures', although now largely discredited, continues to stimulate discussion of both the nature of 'shame' and its salience in Japan, both by anthropologists and Japanologists (cf Creighton 1990, Hamaguchi 1982, Sakuta 1967).

2.1 Lebra (1971;1983)

Lebra's accounts of 'shame' (haji) and 'guilt' (sumanai; moshiwakenai; ki ga togameru)[8] in Japan constitute both a significant advance in their understanding generally and in particular, of their relationship with wider social factors (see subsection 1.1.6 below).

Here, aspects of haji (and to some extent 'guilt' also) will be examined in comparison with the structural account of the English emotions of shame and guilt given by Taylor (op cit, see Chapter One above). The purpose in doing so is to look for points of similarity which possibly lend support to Taylor's claim for a 'universal structure' of shame, or any aspects on which the Japanese empirical evidence appears to lay such a claim open to doubt.

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[8]"... three commonly used expressions ... closest to 'guilty'..." (Lebra 1971:243). Lebra gives no indication as to possible contextual differences in the usage of these terms; cf Wilson (1973) (see subsection 2.5 below) with regard to Chinese 'shame' terminology.

2.1.1 Shame and status

According to Taylor, it will be recalled, shame is essentially concerned with a fundamental and absolute degradation of the agent's status. In Lebra's view, based on her empirical research in Japan, haji is indeed bound up with matters of status, but contrary to Taylor's view, it is not loss of status which is the essence of haji but rather incongruency between the agent's actual behaviour, attributes etc. and that expected of someone occupying the agent's particular status:

> "... shame is generated or triggered ... in conjunction with 'status' occupancy. It is assumed here that an actor is vulnerable to shame when and where he poses as a status occupant. Shame results from whatever happens to undermine or denigrate the claimed status by revealing something ... of the claimer which is inconsistent with the status." (1971:246)

It is important to remember that the sense in which 'status' is construed by Taylor is that concerning the individual self and this term may perhaps more accurately connote 'worth' (cf Rawls op cit). By contrast, Japanese social structure emphasizes more 'objective' status, in the sense of 'social category'. Thus, Lebra's concepts of "status occupancy" and "status incongruency", operative in Japan, have less to do with a 'fall' in standing of an individual self and more with failure to meet with the expectations of an occupant of a specific social position.[9] [10]

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[9]Of course, this does not exclude the possibility that a 'western' agent may also experience shame for such failure in his/her capacity as a 'social status occupant'. The interesting question, given Lebra's contention, is whether or not shame is ever experienced by Japanese individuals when they are not posing as such an occupant. Lebra suggests that it is not; she identifies a clear demarcation between "on-

2.1.2. Shame and 'norm violation/deviation'

Further, for Taylor, in the idea that shame entails being seen (potentially at least) in a different and deficient way from that in which the agent believes s/he ought to be seen, the idea that shame requires visible violation of, or deviation from, some norm is implicit:

> "The agent is seen as deviating from some norm, and in feeling shame he will identify with the audience's view and the consequent verdict that he has lost status." (Taylor op cit:57)

In her earlier paper, Lebra does not discuss the question of norm violation in relation to shame and 'status incongruency'; indeed, she explicitly disregards the specific aetiology of shame:

> "What kind of undesirable state brings about ... a status-incongruent situation is not essential to our delineation of shame ..." (1971:246)

In this, she is clearly close to Taylor's argument that the myriad potentially different "cases" of shame have no bearing on the structure of shame itself.

However, in her later paper she states that shame occurs when:

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stage formality constrained by shame and ... off-stage informality allowing for shamelessness" (1983:200), the latter being a period during which "free, personal, uninhibited self-disclosure"(ibid:199) is permitted.

[10]Cf also the point about 'whole status shame'; see Chapter One, subsection 10.3.1.

> "a Japanese individual ... seriously fails in living up to an expected level of ability, knowledge, performance, rectitude, propriety, or any other value. Inherent in this shame is the exposure of a distinct norm violation." (1983:194)[11]

Thus, on this point the two accounts are in agreement.

2.1.2.i 'Shame/Embarrassment'

Where Lebra seems to depart from Taylor's view on the necessity of norm violation for shame is in her discussion of "surface-level shame affecting the outer self only" and "the exposure sensitivity of the outer self", or "embarrassment" (ibid).[12] Apparently, Japanese experience haji simply when exposed to an audience, irrespective of whether any wrong-doing has occurred:

> "... one feels haji when subjected not only to ridicule but to praise. What gives rise to haji here is the fact that one is exposed to the concentrated attention or 'gaze' of others, whether it is malevolent or benevolent." (ibid).[13]

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[11]This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that in the first paper, her aim is "to delineate a [social] mechanism which conceptually differentiates guilt from shame" (1971:242), whereas in the second, the purpose is to "concentrat[e] on the psychocultural dimension of shame and guilt." (1983:192, original emphasis).

[12]The Japanese term haji covers both this and what might be termed 'shame proper'; there is no lexical distinction between the two, as in English. Consequently, Lebra contends that they do not constitute two separate categories for Japanese. Moreover, Taylor's definition of embarrassment, as resulting from an inability to respond to a demand for action in a social situation (1985:69), is very different from Lebra's.

[13]Cf Metge op cit:16-17; see section 4.5e) below.

Moreover:

> "Exposure sensitivity is not only a spontaneous response but a culturally desirable and even prescribed attitude.[14] What underlies this is the modesty code whereby the self is supposed to remain hidden, unexpressed, or inconspicuous. One is thus expected, when exposed or about to be exposed, to behave as if one were embarrassed or shy." (1983:197; emphasis added)

Thus, for this 'shame/embarrassment',

> "norm violation is not a necessary condition." (ibid).

However, given that there is this cultural proscription on self-exposure (where this means disclosure of aspects of one's private self e.g. opinions, desires, tastes etc.), any instance of such exposure

> "itself can be said to amount to a norm violation." (1983:197)

Despite this exception, it may be seen that on the whole, in Lebra's view:

> "among the Japanese norm violation is not a necessary condition for giving rise to shame" (ibid:192-193).

2.1.3 Shyness and "stranger anxiety"

Related to "embarrassment-haji" (ibid:194), according to Lebra, are tereru and hanikamu ("shy", used of "gestures, behavior styles, or speech patterns", ibid:197)[15] and hitomishiri or "stranger

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[14]Cf the social constructionist claim (see Chapter Two above).

[15]It is interesting that Lebra also refers here to "... other untranslatable equivalents of 'shy'." (ibid). If something is "untranslatable", can it be said to be "equivalent"? (cf the discussion of conceptual equivalence and translation in the Introduction). On the contrary, the implication would seem to be that the unnamed terms to which Lebra

anxiety".[16] All these terms thus appear to be elements in a complex of concepts which may be described as the broad category of shame phenomena.

2.1.4 Shame and responsibility

The generally accepted understanding among Western philosophers, identified in Chapter One, that one need not be personally responsible for the action, condition etc. giving rise to shame, is not disputed by Lebra. Indeed, in her discussion of 'social sharing of shame' in Japan, she demonstrates the necessary connection between the deeds of others and the self's shame which is implied when shame is viewed as status contingent:

> "... shame is vicariously experienced by others who share the same status because what is shamed is not an individual person but the status itself." (1971:251)[17]

Thus, any member of a group or social category can cause shame in another member of that group or category in virtue of their common membership. In Japan, where the relationship of shame to status is so close and so clearly demonstrated, this social sharing of shame is culturally recognized and "institutionalized" (ibid).

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refers denote something extremely culture-specific. Unfortunately these are not discussed.

[16]cf Javanese isin identified and discussed by Keeler (op cit); see Chapter Two, above.

[17]This represents an interesting contrast to the 'whole shameful status' aspect of some 'traditional' cultures discussed earlier, in that in this case, the status is 'shamed' even though it is not normally negatively evaluated.

2.1.5 Guilt and responsibility

According to many western accounts, this question of responsibility is one of the most important features distinguishing shame from guilt. In order to feel guilt, an agent must see him or herself as at least causally responsible for a wrong, bad or undesirable state of affairs (Taylor op cit:91). It appears, however, that Japanese experience guilt

> "when they see their kin or other significant persons suffer ... regardless of their responsibility for these sufferings." (1983:204-205)

Presumably, on Taylor's account, in such a case it is not guilt which the agent experiences but some other emotion; or if it is guilt, then there must have been some action or omission of the agent which has had the indirect effect of producing others' suffering. This is because Taylor maintains that

> "feelings of guilt ... cannot arise from the deeds or omissions of others" (91)

and thus, to preclude the experience of guilt by one agent, "whatever causal chain there may be" must be broken by the agency of another (92).

2.1.6 The social mechanism: asymmetry and reciprocity

As indicated above, in her earlier paper, Lebra identifies a "social mechanism" which she sees as constituting the fundamental difference between shame and guilt. According to Lebra:

> "... there are two types of social structure in both of which we get involved in every society. One is identified as 'reciprocal' and the other as 'asymmetric'. ... Guilt relates to reciprocity ... while shame involves asymmetry." (1971:243)

The asymmetric social structure comprises such elements as social status and status occupancy. As has already been established, these concepts, and the associated idea of "status incongruency", are essentially involved in 'shame'. Further, in any 'shame' situation, there is the sense of exposure, not necessarily just in front of one individual 'Other', but potentially before unlimited others (see below).

By contrast, guilt is based on the principle of reciprocity, i.e.:

> "... the rule by which two actors in interaction, Ego and Alter, expect of each other to maintain a balance between mutual rights and duties, social assets and liabilities, debt and payment, give and take." (ibid)

Thus, in an ideal situation, a benefit (whatever it may be) donated by one party must in some way be returned by its recipient to the donor, in order to restore the balance between them. However, a disturbance in this balance between debtor and creditor, giver and receiver (in such circumstances as, for example, where a debt turns out to be unrepayable), creates the occasion for the occurrence of guilt.[18] Thus:

> ".. guilt hinges upon tension between the lost balance of reciprocity and the pressure to restore it." (ibid:246)

2.1.6.i Cultural variation

Although they are present in all societies (Lebra maintains), it is in relation to these twin structures that cultural variation exists, on a number of points. Firstly, in the case of 'shame', in Japan there is an

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[18]This aspect of guilt's nature is reflected in the German terms "Schuld" and "schultig", which not only mean 'guilt' and 'guilty' but also 'debt' and 'indebted' (cf Lewis op cit:76).

emphasis on a sense of exposure before a diffuse, unspecified 'audience' rather than just the immediate "eyewitnesses" to the situation. Lebra calls this the "extensibility of the scope of exposure" (1971:250) and identifies its source in the inextricable link between status and 'shame' in Japanese social structure, which is such that

> "... Ego's status can be identified by a large collectivity..." (ibid).

Secondly, in the case of guilt, Lebra claims that this also need not only be felt in relation to a specific other but may be felt towards a symbolic other representing all potential actual others[19], or to any of a number of relatively specific or general others in between (ibid:244). She further claims that:

> "... there is cultural variation in the degree of specificity of the Alter who appears injured by Ego..." (ibid:244).

In the Japanese case, the other does tend to be relatively specific, contrasting clearly with the situation as regards 'shame', indicated in the previous paragraph.

2.1.6.ii 'Shame-cultures' and 'Guilt-cultures'

There is further cultural variation between aspects of 'shame' and 'guilt' (and which of the two is apparently prevalent in any given society), which relates to what Lebra identifies as a distinction between "monotheistic" and "sociocultic" cultures (1971:253). In the former, Lebra claims:

> "... guilt ... is more generalized in terms of ubiquitous and unlimited debt to the single, universal creditor [i.e. God] ..." (1971:252);

whereas:

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[19]The symbolic generalized other is, of course, "God".

> "Shame ... tends to be more specifically confined ..." (ibid)

In a sociocultic culture, 'Society' replaces God, and the opposite is true, i.e., as indicated above, guilt tends to be experienced vis a vis a very specific Other, whilst shame is felt towards the generalized collectivity which is 'Society'. According to Lebra, Japan is such a sociocultic culture.

2.2 Creighton (1990)

Creighton's paper is primarily concerned with this 'neo-Benedictine' question of cultural variation in the prevalence of 'shame' or 'guilt'. Whilst a large part of her argument is devoted to contesting criticisms of Benedict[20], in the course of her defence she illuminates a number of interesting aspects of Japanese 'shame', particularly its relation with other key aspects of Japanese culture and social organization. In this, her approach is similar both to Lebra's and to that of the 'social constructionists', an example of whose account of 'shame' in another culture was considered in Chapter Two.

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[20]Creighton is not concerned to argue that Benedict's distinction between 'shame-cultures' and 'guilt-cultures' was correct but rather to present a re-interpretation of Benedict, which indicates that she did not in fact hold certain views which are mistakenly attributed to her and for which she has most frequently been severely criticized. In particular, she attempts to counter the accusation that Benedict displays ethnocentric tendencies (by implying that cultures in which shame regulation of behaviour predominates are in some way 'inferior' to those predisposed to guilt). She argues that, to the contrary, Benedict herself was one of the earliest champions of cultural relativism and eschewed the practice of judging other cultures according to the values of one's own (282-285).

2.2.1 Creighton's model of 'shame'

The influence of Piers (op cit) and the psychoanalytic characterization of western shame is again evident in the model adopted by Creighton:[21]

> "Shame involves the awareness of inadequacy or failure to achieve a wished-for self-image which is accompanied by, or originally arises from, the fear of separation and abandonment" (1990:285)

This is in contrast to guilt, which is

> "generated whenever the boundaries of negative behavior ... are touched or transgressed." (ibid:286)

and which is associated with fear of punishment.

Creighton contests criticisms of this model[22] and defends her adoption of it by citing various Japanese scholars who have endorsed this characterization, despite their rejection of certain aspects of 'western' culture (e.g. the ideology of individual autonomy) which have been influential in the formulation of psychoanalytic theory. For example,

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[21]Her account is nonetheless included, since she does not adopt this view uncritically but rather, explicitly justifies her employment of it by reference to indigenous views.

[22]cf e.g. De Vos 1973. His primary disagreement is with the psychoanalytic model of guilt = transgression. He claims that for Japanese, guilt arises from harm done to another (typically a parent) as a result of failing to fulfil obligations (147). Clearly, the idea of harm to others inherent in guilt is not exclusively Japanese (cf Rawls op cit, Taylor op cit); thus his claim for "a specifically Japanese pattern of guilt" is questionable. Moreover, as Creighton points out: "... his argument that guilt among Japanese results from a failure to achieve positive goals may be a matter of interpretation. It seems quite possible that 'nullification of parental expectation' (De Vos op cit:148) may in the Japanese case constitute not just the failure to attain a positive ego-ideal but the transgression of a negative limit." (1990:304-305, n.6).

Sakuta (op cit) identifies a further variant of Japanese 'shame', shuchi, which is disregarded by Benedict and other non-Japanese scholars and which

> "... arises in circumstances when people cause harm to a group member or to others they have relied on." (Creighton 1990:288).

Hamaguchi (op cit) asserts that it is the latter concept which has been misinterpreted as 'guilt' (by, for example, De Vos [loc cit]). It seems possible that the 'western' association of 'harm to others' with 'guilt' (cf footnote 22) may be responsible for this misinterpretation.[23]

By implication, Creighton thus appears to endorse the idea that Piers' characterization of shame is relatively culture-independent.

2.2.2 The relation of 'shame'/'guilt' to other aspects of culture

It is Creighton's account of the correlation between other significant cultural values and practices and the prevalence of either 'shame' or 'guilt' which represents her most significant contribution in terms of a greater understanding of the overall concept of 'shame'.

Creighton asserts that whilst it is unlikely that a society could function without some social control in the form of shame and guilt (1990:291), optimal 'efficiency' is achieved neither when one is dominant, nor when there is "absolute symmetry" between the two, but when there is an "asymmetrical balance" (ibid:292-293). She also asserts that a correspondence between

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[23]This understanding of shuchi would seem to invalidate claims for the primacy of guilt made by subsequent scholars such as Lebra (1983:206,207) who, interestingly, cites Sakuta in her earlier paper (1971:248) but makes no reference to this term.

wider social processes and individual moral development is likely.[24] Given such a correspondence, it follows that there should be consistency between elements of the cultural environment and which of the moral emotions is emphasized; such consistency Creighton then demonstrates for Japan.

The three aspects of Japanese culture she selects for this purpose are:

i) the general philosophy of human nature;
ii) the greater value accorded to the group over the individual; and
iii) the method of child-rearing (1990:293-294).

2.2.2.i The Japanese view of human nature

Creighton identifies a contrast between the 'western' view of human nature (influenced significantly by the Judeo-Christian tradition) and the Japanese view, and a corresponding distinction between the conceptions of ethics accompanying such views. The former emphasizes our "inherent evil", which has to be restrained. 'Guilt' sanctions are the means by which such restraint is achieved (296). In addition, morality is viewed as a set of absolute and universal principles of right and wrong, embodied (ideally at least) in God.

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[24]The precise nature of this interrelationship between 'external' social factors and "interior mental structures" (Edwards 1981:522), whether it is deterministic or dialectical, etc., is of course a matter for dispute, and this question echoes the preoccupations of the 'culture-and-personality' debate in early psychological anthropology. Cf Elias (op cit), who (like his social constructionist successors) argues that the structure of the psyche directly reflects the social structure; also cf Heller (op cit) on the homology of external and internal authority structures.

Japanese, however, view humanity as essentially good or neutral. Thus, the emphasis here is on "shaping human beings into a socially desirable form" (ibid:297), for which a sense of 'shame' is required. This is in keeping with the Japanese ethical position, according to which conduct is assessed by reference to its appropriateness to the circumstances and its moral evaluation, as either 'good' or 'bad', is thereby also determined. In this "situational" conception of ethics (ibid), the definition of a 'wrong action' is thus possible only in general terms. So, while the potential for feeling 'guilt' in certain situations is not excluded, Creighton posits that the dominant moral sanction is likely to be 'shame', accompanying the impetus to conform to the clearly defined demands of one's particular roles and status.[25]

2.2.2.ii Group and individual

In Japan, greater value is placed on the group than on the individual. However, this distinction is not as clear-cut as it may appear, since the Japanese sense of 'self' is less rigidly defined than that with which 'westerners' are familiar and indeed is bound up with the social group. In fact:

> "The Japanese word for 'myself' is jibun, literally meaning 'my part' of some larger whole." (1990:294)

Thus the identification of a Japanese 'person' with the collectivity of which s/he is a member (whether the family, workforce, etc.) is such that s/he does not in any meaningful way conceive of him/herself as an 'individual' apart from the group.

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[25]This emphasis on arubekiyo or 'the way one is supposed to be' (Minami 1953:197) seems to further undermine the assertion (cf Lebra op cit) that 'guilt', not 'shame', is predominant in Japan (see footnote 23 above).

According to Creighton, this emphasis on group solidarity results in a corresponding emphasis on 'shame' sanctions (ibid:295). This is in keeping with the definition of shame given above, in which the threat of estrangement from one's 'significant others' (parents, peers etc.) is paramount (as opposed to fear of punishment, which is typical of guilt).

2.2.2.iii Child-rearing and socialization

The value accorded to group solidarity and the emphasis on interdependency between 'individual' and group (given the qualifications to these terms identified above) is also reflected in the way in which Japanese (mothers) socialize their children into acceptable behaviour. This in turn relies heavily on instilling a sense of social disapproval through practices which also emphasize the sense of estrangement and ostracism inherent in the experience of shame. For example, in contrast to the common 'western' practice of inflicting punitive sanctions (such as restricting privileges and/or freedom), or even in some cases physical punishment, both of which are supposed to encourage the recipient to reflect on the 'wrong-ness' of his/her conduct, a Japanese mother will ignore a child who has behaved in an unacceptable way and effectively deny that child's existence (ibid:298).

The effectiveness of such different sanctions lies in their reinforcement of the prevailing cultural emphasis on either independence or interdependence discussed above:

"The painful message that Western parents convey to their children ... is that they are still not independent or autonomous yet. The threat behind maternal ostracism is abandonment, the same threat that Piers describes as the essence of shame. The painful message Japanese mothers give their children is that they are not absolutely at union, they still risk rejection or abandonment." (ibid:299)

It is not only the way in which children's behaviour is sanctioned which resonates with the cultural emphasis on harmonious union with others. The practice of co-sleeping, by which parents and children share not only the same room but initially also the same bed, also reinforces the dependency on others which is valued, not disdained, in Japanese culture, as does the peculiarly Japanese sentiment amae (cf Doi 1973).

2.3 Asano-Tamanoi (1987)

For comparative purposes, Asano-Tamanoi's research straddles two (geographically distant) of the above-mentioned 'culture-areas': Japan and 'the Mediterranean'. In this sub-section, her conclusions concerning aspects of Japanese haji will be considered, while the implications of her Catalonian data will be examined below, in the section on 'Mediterranean' anthropology.

Perhaps the most important claim made by Asano-Tamanoi concerns the multiplicity of meanings of haji identified even within a single village (pseudonym 'Mino'). Thus, haji has both

> "... a variable 'surface' as well as an immutable 'deep' meaning." (105).

In Japan, the latter abstract level of meaning relates to the ideal of household (ie) continuity, achieved

through "impartible inheritance" by a single heir.[26] It is coupled with the equally abstract concept of 'name' or na:

> "Na, in the village context, refers to the family name of the household. Every Japanese carries a single family name, paternal (if one's father is a successor) or maternal (if one's mother is a successor). ... household continuity is symbolized and expressed in the continuity of the same family name ..." (111)

At this level, then, haji thus refers neither to specific individuals, nor to their conduct, but rather to a state of affairs - in this specific case, to the absence of household continuity.

By contrast, the concrete, particular meaning of haji relates to the failure of individuals to fulfil their obligations as household members, i.e. to properly play one's role. The concept which is coupled with haji in this case is meiyo[27] or 'honour', which is bestowed on people who successfully meet their obligations to the household. However, such obligations also relate to the perpetuation of continuity; thus the abstract and the particular 'meanings' of haji and its counter-notions are in fact also related. This is because the quality of na can be changed through the conduct of family members; it can be "raised" (na o ageru) or "polluted" (na o kegasu):

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[26]An ie is constituted by the members of a single family claiming shared descent from a common ancestor. The household property and family wealth is passed on to one descendant only (ideally the eldest son but in practice any suitable member of the next generation, whether a blood relation or not).

[27]cf Lebra (op cit).

" 'rippana na' or 'meiyo-aru na' (honorable or honored name) refers to the state of household continuity that has been realized through honorable conduct of its members. Honor is subsumed under the notion of na but makes its appearance only when people ... evaluate men and women's conduct in terms of their respective obligations as household members." (113)

It might be argued (cf Taylor op cit) that Asano-Tamanoi's description and interpretation of Japanese haji does not reveal a significantly different structural understanding of what it means to feel 'shame', since the different "meanings" to which she refers are in fact no more than differences in the substantive content of the emotion. Nonetheless, her conclusions do appear to confirm Lebra's recognition that for Japanese, the defining characteristic of haji is the supreme importance of one's role (in this case, as a family and household member), over and above one's own individual standing. This in itself demonstrates a different cultural emphasis in Japanese haji from that with which many of us in the 'west' are familiar in our own concept of shame.

2.4 Ng (1981)

In this example from China, an indigenous concept of shame is not elaborated, as noted in the introduction to this Chapter.[28] Rather, the Western structural definition of shame as 'failure to match the Ego-Ideal' (Piers op cit) is applied to Chinese culture. Nonetheless, an interesting point emerges from Ng's paper, in that she identifies an aspect of

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[28]Indeed, no Chinese terms to which the translation 'shame' refers are given. From this, it might be inferred that in Ng's view, the concept to which the English word 'shame' relates is in many ways similar to the Chinese concept she discusses but does not name.

'shame' which she sees as characteristically Chinese.[29]

2.4.1 Shame and the 'ideal self'

According to Ng, the 'ideal self' is not limited to an internalized image of a parent figure (77), either generally, or particularly in the Confucian Chinese concept of shame. Rather, it is any exemplar of a standard of conduct or value to which an individual aspires. Thus, in the culture under consideration:

> "... the ideal self is given the name of 'the princely man', chun-tse. Its opposite is the 'small people', hsiao-yen, that is, the common people." (ibid)

The 'princely man' is not only socially but morally elite and the nature of 'shame' reflects this elitist principle[30]: in aspiring to emulate the 'princely man', an individual seeks to exceed what is expected of the majority of people in terms of character and conduct (although it is recognized that achievement of this ideal is extremely difficult). Thus, in Confucian Chinese culture, shame derives from membership (actual or desired) of an elite, not only when the ideals and/or standards of that elite are not met (which may anyway be inevitable) but most importantly, when an individual believes himself, for whatever reason, to be unworthy of membership of that elite (84).

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[29]This does not, however, imply that it is unique to the Chinese, as is made clear by her reference to the parallel with the Christian ideal of 'saintliness' (79).

[30]The evident influence of this context of elitism on the interpretation of shame results in an important cross-cultural difference in the relative emphases in Confucian Chinese shame and 'western' shame.

2.4.2 Shame and the 'audience'

Another important point identified by Ng concerns the audience involved in shame. (79) The actual audience before whom the individual who aspires to the ideal of the 'princely man' conducts himself is the 'common people'. They, however, are not those "to whom he is answerable for his conduct", that is, they are not the salient, judging audience (although presumably it is important to successfully maintain the example of 'princely man' before them). The judging audience is that which is selected by the individual (i.e., others whom he perceives as embodying the ideal) through his aspiration to be like them.[31]

2.5 Wilson (1973)

In contrast to Ng's account of Confucian Chinese 'shame', Wilson's consideration of the concept does indeed at least attempt to elaborate the multiple levels or degrees of 'shame' operative in Chinese society and the varying usages of the Chinese terms which denote these 'calibrations' of shame.[32]

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[31]cf Thrane (op cit:148) on "wished-for identifications" and 154: "The community in which one judges oneself is ... not necessarily constituted by those who happen to be around. It is rather the group one identifies with." See the discussion above in Chapter One.

[32]"It is important to point up these distinctions, for direct translations from the Chinese frequently by-pass the points of reference and the level of emotional content implied in any specific Chinese term." (1973:435) This is a significant observation and criticism which well applies to Ng's otherwise valuable study, but which equally well applies to the translation and discussion of the concept of shame and related concepts (e.g. 'honour') in many other cultures (notably in 'Mediterranean' anthropology, see below).

However, whilst this examination of Chinese shame terminology and its applications is careful and thorough, the focus of his paper is more on the use of shame and shaming in socialization as a means to ensuring conformity and in particular, political loyalty (to the Communist Party). Nonetheless, his work highlights the complexity of Chinese 'shame' and its salience in the culture as a whole.

There are seven different terms in the Chinese language by means of which aspects of the concepts of (embarrassment and) shame may be expressed. These can be seen as points on a continuum between mild and extreme. In addition, certain of these terms are used only in written Chinese while others are confined to verbal usage. There are differences, too, in the terms which may be applied both to the self and to others, to 'private' and 'public' actions and those which are reserved for self-reference only. Finally, the degree of moral censure implied in the different terms varies also. The terms are as follows:

i) hsin-li-pu-shu-fu This is the mildest expression, conveying "slight unease or very mild embarrassment" and literally meaning "to be uncomfortable in the heart". It is a less common and less 'strong' expression than

ii) pu-hao-i-szu, used in both written and spoken Chinese, referring both to one's own actions or thoughts and those of others and the nearest equivalent in meaning to the English 'embarrassment'.

iii) The phrase tiu-lien ("to lose face") is, apparently, one of the commonest expressions and closest, in terms of intensity, to the English 'ashamed'.

iv) "More severe, and used only in self-reference, is the expression ts'an-k'uei which denotes a sense of deep shame." (cite)

The final three terms are those in which moral condemnation is implied. Of these,

v) hsiu-ts'an, although not in common use,

> "when used with reference to the self ... is indicative of a state of utter mortification."

Apparently, the degree of emotion indicated by this phrase is more usually expressed

> "through the addition of an intensifier to a less acute notation for shame ... [e.g.] chen-ts'an-ku'ei (to be really or truly ashamed) or ts'an-ku'ei-szu-li (ashamed to death)."

vi) pu-yao-lien and

vii) wu-ch'ih (the former used colloquially in speech, the latter more literary, though not exclusively so), both refer only to the actions of others. Their closest English equivalent is "to be totally shameless" and, as noted above, they both indicate that the person(s) so described is morally reprehensible.[33]

3. THE 'MEDITERRANEAN'

As mentioned in the Introduction, 'honour and shame' have long been regarded by anthropologists as key concepts in a value system which is believed to characterize a number of cultures collectively known as 'the Mediterranean'. The putative ubiquity of the 'honour/shame complex' has, indeed, been considered

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[33]Interestingly, Wilson claims that the term 'shame' is an inadequate translation of such phrases, because it "is closer to being simply descriptive of an emotional state without normative overtones" (435). As indicated in Chapter Three, this is a typical late twentieth century interpretation of shame but its validity is not universally agreed. The trend towards such a psychological rather than moral interpretation of shame, and the possible reasons for it, are considered in Chapter Six.

one of the defining characteristics of this 'culture area'.

The seminal studies of honour and shame include Pitt-Rivers (1961) and Peristiany ([ed.]:1965). In these works, focusing on Spain, Greece and Egypt, among other cultures, the analytical emphasis tended to be placed on the former concept, and its counterpart was frequently regarded as relatively unproblematical. However, since the publication of these studies, anthropologists of this area have reconsidered their validity in the light of the more 'interpretive' perspective taken in recent anthropology. In particular, many of the papers in a more recent collection (Gilmore [ed.]:1987) both draw on and develop criticisms of the honour-and-shame 'model' inherent in the older studies, already made by, for example, Herzfeld (op cit) and Wikan (1984).[34] They represent a closer and more 'particularistic' approach and focus on the indigenous concepts of honour and shame in various communities. In addition, they question the earlier assumption that these 'twin values' are the supreme moral concepts in Mediterranean life. They indicate that in certain cases, shame is in fact the more salient of the two, and that in others, some other value, for example, hospitality or honesty, is accorded greater importance than honour. However, a serious attempt is also made to analyze what, if anything, is peculiar to the 'Mediterranean' honour and shame concepts which may distinguish these from other apparently similar concepts elsewhere.

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[34]They also, to some extent, question the validity of the 'Mediterranean culture area' assumption. However, this question will not be addressed here.

It is from this collection that the majority of the following material is drawn, for the purpose of illustrating the evident diversity of the so-called 'honour/shame complex' within this geographical region.

For the sake of continuity, Asano-Tamanoi's description of vergonya in Catalonia, which she compares with Japanese haji (as outlined above) will be considered first.

3.1 Catalonian 'vergonya' (Asano-Tamanoi op cit)

The variations in 'meaning' of 'shame' identified by Asano-Tamanoi in the Japanese village of Mino are reproduced in the Catalonian village of Belunya (pseudonym). That is, once again there appears to be both 'superficial' and 'deeper' meanings of vergonya. In addition, according to Asano-Tamanoi, it is again in relation to the maintenance of household (casa) continuity that the concept of vergonya is most often employed, and again, the ideal principle of "impartible inheritance" is the means by which such continuity is to be achieved. However, in this case, it is the 'surface' meaning of shame which refers to failure by household members to fulfil domestic obligations:

> "Fathers and mothers who do not fulfill their obligations vis a vis their children, husbands who do not fulfill their obligations vis a vis their wives and vice versa, or heirs who do not fulfill their obligations vis a vis their households as groups, are thus people without shame and their conduct is shameful." (1987:108)

One way in which such failure manifests itself is in indulgence in extra-marital affairs. The individuals who engage in these, through neglecting their familial obligations, lose respecte (respect),

which is the concept which is coupled with vergonya at this level. However, according to Asano-Tamanoi, such affairs have a further significance in terms of the ideal of household continuity, which lies in the threat of the introduction of illegitimacy which they represent. Thus, whilst it is acceptable to bring in outsiders as potential heirs by legitimate means (e.g. marriage or adoption) in order to ensure the succession of the household:

> "The 'illegitimate sexuality' of illicit liaisons should never be allowed to intrude in the household sphere ... household continuity should be the extension of contacts between legitimate partners as 'physical persons'. ... The sanction of shame is resorted to whenever illegitimate blood is brought in the sanctity of the household sphere ..." (ibid)

At this level, vergonya is coupled with the traditionally emphasized concept of honra (honour) and the latter is bestowed on both men and women who, through their legitimate union, produce many "good" offspring. According to Asano-Tamanoi:

> "Catalonian shame of illegitimacy thus constitutes the deeper meaning of shame." (ibid:110)

(even though, unlike the situation in Japan, the shame here still attaches to actual "physical persons" (109) and is not an abstract concept as in the haji/na complex).

Despite the many similarities she perceives between the Japanese and the Spanish notions of 'shame' and their relation to the household, the differences between them can be traced, Asano-Tamanoi speculates, to the difference in the degree to which the influence of the state in each country has penetrated the household (ibid:114-116). In positing such an explanation, she thus also makes a case for the significant influence of wider social factors on the concept of shame.

In Belunya, despite government attempts to take over aspects of village life, state influence has apparently been successfully kept at a distance. This is in keeping with the historical nationalism and separation of Catalonia from the rest of Spain. In Japan, however, the ideology of the nation as one ie with all individual ie as branches, coupled with the successful integration of all aspects of households in to the overall Japanese 'system' were such that

> "The traditional notion of household continuity and the state's family policies during industrialization meshed in a particular way .., mutually reinforcing each other." (ibid:114).

Thus, in Japan, the state ideology emphasized the maintenance of household continuity, whereas in Catalonia, the only aspect of the state to have had any real influence was the ideology of state religion, particularly "the idea of 'legitimate sexuality'" (ibid:115).

Asano-Tamanoi identifies a further, gender-related difference between the two nations. The Japanese upholding of the abstract ideal of household continuity is largely adopted by men, while women, it appears, still attach a great deal of importance to the actual behaviour of specific individuals. By contrast, in Catalonia it is women who, by their greater identification with Catholic ideology, uphold and perpetuate the ideal of sexual legitimacy. Thus:

> "... while women represent the total social system in Belunya, men represent it in Mino; but in both villages, women are the main evaluators of honor and shame through their powerful gossip." (ibid:116).

3.2 Shame, Honesty and Honour in Andalusia (Gilmore 1987)

Gilmore's paper is largely a study of the components of male status. Although the traditional association in much Mediterranean anthropology is of honour with men, shame with women (Brandes 1987:122, Gilmore 1987:90), this association is modified by Gilmore, in that he emphasizes the inadequacy of such a generalized view and attempts to identify the relevance of a variety of different values in the lives of men in the Andalusian town of Fuenmayor (pseudonym).

According to Gilmore, in Andalusia honour is not the dominant moral concept applicable to men, at least not in the sense in which honour is understood in the traditional pioneer studies. These portray honour as an aggressive, primarily masculine quality acquired in competition with other men for domination and precedence, particularly in "erotic contests" (1987:90). This "emphasis on flamboyant sexual rivalry" has obscured the fact that male honra is actually a much more complex and "richer" value concept, comprising other elements such as integrity and honesty (ibid:91).

Indeed, Gilmore states categorically that the traditional terms for 'honour' "are virtually obsolete" in the town in which he conducted his research and that

> "The operative evaluative conception for both men and women today - at least that which bears a linguistic label - is verguenza, or shame."(ibid:93)[35]

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[35]Thus, it would appear that in Andalusia, verguenza is an "experience-near" concept whilst honra is "experience-distant" (Geertz 1974). Cf Wikan (op cit) on shame in Cairo and Oman.

The counterpart to verguenza is honradez (honesty), particularly, but not exclusively, in money matters:

> "... honesty is social ethics, demanding scrupulous compliance in social commitments ... Its yardstick is shame ..." (ibid:94, emphasis added)

It follows that

> "... the unethical, dishonest man is shameless" (sinverguenza) (ibid).

3.2.1 Reciprocity

Gilmore identifies an underlying principle which governs honesty and shame relations in Andalusia:

> "Its [honesty's] internal mechanism and its social (thus measurable) manifestation is a punctilious - though implicit - reciprocity, usually balanced and predictable." (ibid)[36]

If this reciprocity principle is violated, particularly if one enters into an implicit 'exchange contract' with another with no intention of 'keeping one's side of the bargain', one may be labelled sinverguenzon ("a big shameless") (ibid:95). Such a label is the ultimate censure.

As noted above, it is not only in the realm of economic contracts that the notions of honesty and shame, based on reciprocal obligations, have application. These pervade every aspect of life. Thus, one is also bound to fulfil one's obligations with respect to one's spouse and dependants, or one's peers:

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[36]It is interesting to contrast this account of the significance of the reciprocity principle in Andalusian 'shame' and honesty with Lebra's account of its relevance to guilt, particularly in Japan.

> "In every case one acquires an implicit contract; a marriage, a wage agreement, a friendship, a loan, or a representative position. In each case to be 'honorable', that is, to be virtuous before the eyes of the community, one pays one's debts in a gracious manner, one 'complies.' Honor is the respectful adherence to community tradition, conformity to cherished norms." (ibid:99).

4. NEW ZEALAND: The Maori concept of 'whakamaa' (Metge 1986)

> "Whakamaa is a word standing for a concept which Maori use in the process of organising and talking about their experience of being human. It cannot be matched with any one English word but covers a range of meaning that is divided among several. It suggests a way of thinking about interpersonal relations which is different from that expressed in and reinforced by the English language." (ibid:17)

In her work on whakamaa, Metge explicitly eschews the use of

> "concepts and theories developed within Western scholarly disciplines [e.g. anthropology] to order and explain the experience and concepts of other cultures." (21-22).

Rather, she attempts to explicate the indigenous view of the Maori concept of whakamaa by reference to numerous detailed descriptions by Maori informants, on the basis of which she constructs a model of this concept with a minimal amount of interpretation other than that necessary for clarification or summarizing. This is therefore extremely valuable for the purpose of considering shame in cross-cultural perspective, since it represents an example of perhaps the nearest possible thing to a genuinely indigenous understanding of a similar concept in another culture.

In "A Dictionary of the Maori Language" (Williams 1957:161, cited by Metge op cit:18) the word whakamaa has the following explanations: "to whiten" (transitive verb); "shame, abasement" (nouns) and "shy, ashamed" (adjectives). Whakamaa feelings and behaviour are distinguished.

4.1 Feelings

The range these cover is extensive and includes the following connotations: shyness, embarrassment, inadequacy, inability to act effectively, depression, feeling ashamed. Uncertainty, fear and hurt are also represented by whakamaa (pp 28-30).[37]

Despite this comprehensive range of feelings associated with whakamaa, according to Metge, the most common translations into English are nonetheless still 'shyness', 'embarrassment' and 'shame' (ibid:30). However, these are not interchangeable. Dependent on context, their improper usage is misleading (31).

4.2 Behaviour

The behavioural manifestations of whakamaa are primarily "unresponsiveness" and "withdrawal from communication with others" (ibid:25, cf Ablamowicz op cit). In particular, the severance of visual communication, through turning the back or covering the face for example, is typical (ibid:27). In addition, restricted movement, silence and aural 'shutdown' appear to be common (ibid:26). In extreme cases,

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[37]Aspects of the archetypal interpretation of 'western' shame are thus represented in this range (for example as inadequacy).

> "... whakamaa is occasionally manifested in actual physical flight, running away and hiding body as well as feelings." (ibid:27).

4.3 'Whakamaa' and 'mana'

According to Metge, all the disparate meanings of whakamaa are united by their common concern with the central Maori concept of mana. This is fully discussed by Metge (Chapter Four passim); however, the present exposition of this concept and its relation to whakamaa must necessarily be summarily brief.

There are two predominant interpretations of mana, one social, one spiritual; the first associated with Pakeha (non-Maori New Zealanders), the latter with Maori. The meanings given are, variously, 'prestige', 'standing', 'power' and 'authority'. According to Metge, for Pakeha the emphasis is on the first two, whereas Maori

> ... place the primary stress on 'power' and 'authority', see 'prestige' and 'standing' as derived from the demonstrable possession of power and authority, and in many cases identify the power involved as being of a spiritual, supernatural kind." (62)

However, even amongst Maori the understandings of mana are multiple (63).[38]

Mana is also related to 'self-image', but although Maori accept this as one of the 'meanings' of mana, the latter "has a spiritual dimension which is lacking in that of self-image." (75). In addition, while self-image (in 'western' thought) has a human basis,

> "mana comes ultimately from outside the individual, from spiritual sources ..." (ibid).

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[38]These correspond to tribal, generational, rural and urban subcultural differences.

and is, as identified above, an "empowering" quality (76):

> "To have mana is to succeed in the undertakings for which it is supplied, so much so that success itself is taken as evidence of having mana of a particular kind, and failure to achieve a goal or overcome disadvantage as evidence of having lost some or all of one's mana or not having had much to begin with. Thus loss of mana involves more than mere reduction in self-esteem. It means loss of power and the capacity for achievement ... it adversely affects a person's relations with other people, causing him to draw back from those he no longer has the power to control or to deal with as equals ..." (ibid).

A decrease in one's mana or self-image as a result of others' undermining causes whakamaa. Further, this reduced mana or self-image itself makes one more susceptible to whakamaa (ibid); the latter is "both product and expression of lower or lowered mana" (78). Whakamaa is thus

> "bound up with the lack or loss of mana in relation to others" and
>
> "always involves an implicit if not explicit comparison with other people in which the person who is whakamaa comes off second best." (31-32).

4.4 Other characteristics of 'whakamaa'

Whakamaa may be slight or intense, fleeting or longer lasting, and is experienced both privately (as when others are unaware of one's feelings) and publicly:

> "the presence of witnesses nearly always increases the intensity of whakamaa" (33).

Different categories of 'audience' create different degrees of whakamaa; thus, in front of one's family,

it is usually minimal, whereas before strangers it increases significantly (34).[39]

Moreover, whakamaa does not only result from demeaning exposure but can be experienced through fear of success as well as of failure in an undertaking urged by others (ibid).

There are varying degrees of whakamaa depending on one's age and 'status':

> "The older a person is, the more status he has, the more wounding his criticism [thus the greater the whakamaa he can create in another] and, conversely, the more deeply he himself is wounded by whakamaa." (35)[40]

Finally, whakamaa, like shame, can be felt for others, both individuals and through shared group membership, especially ancestral and kin groups.

4.5 Causes of 'whakamaa'[41]

Metge classifies the causes of whakamaa into six substantive categories which are associated with three overall 'types' of its experience (for oneself or on

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[39]cf Japanese hitomishiri (Lebra op cit) and Javanese isin (Keeler op cit).

[40]This is reminiscent of the situation in Java according to Keeler (op cit).

[41]Inevitably, 'essentialists' would argue that such causes are irrelevant and any cross-cultural differences immaterial since they do not affect the actual experience of 'shame'; however, in attempting to gain an overall view of the nature of 'shame' in another culture, one cannot ignore such causes and their implications. Indeed, as the cognitive process model of emotions outlined in Chapter Two above dictates, differences in antecedent events, event coding and appraisal may legitimately be regarded as differences in significant aspects of an emotion as a whole and therefore essential for adequate understanding.

others' behalf; generated by self or others; as a result of "wrongdoing" or not [38]). These causes are:

a) Inferiority in relation to others, particularly perception of lower status:

> "whether in general terms or in respect of some valued quality, such as senior descent, age, knowledge, schooling, wealth or occupational status." (39);

b) "Uncertainty and confusion" (44), e.g. when in doubt as to the demands of a situation, course of action required, etc.

c) "Recognition of fault" (46), whether

> "breach of ... social conventions, the community's moral code, the law, or simply [one's] own standards." (47)

d) Humiliation or 'belittlement' of self or one's achievements, whether explicitly or implicitly (i.e. by others "failing to recognise [one's] presence and status" (ibid). The whakamaa experienced in this respect is particularly exacerbated if the 'audience' in the situation is large or if strangers are present (48);

e) "Being singled out" (51) whether the highlighting is for negative or positive reasons or just due to some difference;

f) On behalf of close associates (e.g. kin or friends), either for them (when they themselves are whakamaa) or due to the reflection of their whakamaa on oneself (52).

The above causes relate primarily to individual whakamaa; however, whole groups are also susceptible for similar reasons but particularly when in a position of unfavourable comparison with other groups and as a result of the faults of individual members of the group (58). The main groups concerned are ancestral and kin groups; however, whakamaa is also generally felt by Maori in relation to Pakeha (60).

4.6. Effects of 'whakamaa'

Unrelieved experiences of whakamaa may result in the sufferer "holding back" (108), "running away" (111), or "hitting out" (112). The first of these may manifest itself as total inhibition of effective action, reducing one to "virtual immobility, for minutes, hours, days or even longer." (109, cf section 4.2. above on the behavioural manifestations of whakamaa). The second is most common when whakamaa-inducing accusations are publicly made (111), unless one's high mana dictates that one resist by turning the whakamaa back on the accuser (112). Aggressive behaviour as an expression of whakamaa is apparently rare;[42] 'getting back at' someone usually takes the form of verbal attack, often by finding fault with the other person's speech or behaviour in return (ibid).

4.7 Relief of 'whakamaa'

Whakamaa is conceived by Maori as "an affliction" (94), i.e. although it may occur due to an individual's own action, behaviour, etc. it is experienced as being visited upon one from without. As such, unless the whakamaa is minimal, people are unable to rid themselves of it unaided and are dependent on others' forgiveness and help (ibid). Its relief is effected in different ways depending on its source and the readiness of others to assist in the process is also related to such considerations. Thus, where "wrongdoing" has occurred, the only way out is through "atonement", the making of restitution to the

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[42]"From experience I am sure that whakamaa often involves anger, but that in most cases it is suppressed and turned in on the self [cf Lewis op cit]. However, if a person who feels whakamaa is pushed past a certain point his whakamaa is likely to surface suddenly in violence." (30)

offended party [ies], "confession and reparation" (95).[43] In such cases, help may be witheld until the appropriate move to atone has been made.

In addition, the experience of whakamaa is itself considered to be

> "part of the reparation, at once admission of fault, apology and expiation" (98).

Where the offence is a private matter, such 'payment' is also private, but in cases of public offence, public acknowledgement of one's wrong, confession and apology are expected (97). In the past, such 'punishment' was followed by reacceptance into the community.[44]

If one has committed no identifiable offence, the help of others in overcoming one's whakamaa is more immediately forthcoming (98). This often takes the form of expressions of aroha.[45]

According to Metge, most experiences of whakamaa are temporary and

> "accepting the proffered expressions of aroha may be all that is necessary to restore someone emerging from whakamaa to full participation in normal social relations .. " (103),

but often complete 'recovery' takes much longer, the feelings outliving the outward signs, and an increased

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[43]However, in cases of extremely severe offence, even this may not be possible to repair the breach, in which case total ostracism from the community is likely (94).

[44]cf Braithwaite (op cit) on "reintegrative shaming".

[45]"To approach someone closely is to express aroha. Aroha is commonly translated as 'love', but it is a special kind of love, caring love, and it includes the ideas of 'feeling sorry for someone', sympathy ('feeling with') and forgiveness." (101)

susceptibility to further experiences being possible (ibid).

Summarizing, Metge identifies the corresponding concept to that of lack or loss of mana as the cause of whakamaa to be such demonstration of aroha (ibid) as its 'cure':

> " ... mana separates and sets people against each other, creating the potential for whakamaa. In contrast, aroha links and binds people together .. It does not cancel out status differences, but bridges and mediates them." (104)

Finally, laughter is identified as both an expression of whakamaa and a contributor to its relief, as when others laugh with the person feeling whakamaa as an affirmation of their solidarity with and aroha for them (107).

4.8 Evaluation of 'whakamaa'

The primary emphasis in the evaluation of whakamaa is on its negative consequences, leading to its characterization as

> "undesirable, involving much personal pain, disruption to social relations and both short and long term inhibition of achievement." (114)

However, judiciously managed, it may have positive benefits and functions. These include reinforcement of social order (primarily within the Maori community; with respect to Maori-Pakeha relations the situation is more complex); conciliation between disputing parties, and stimulus to achievement (although this is not common, the more usual effect being inhibition as indicated above) [114-117].

5. Comparisons and conclusions

It is hoped that the general aim of this Chapter, to illustrate the nature of 'shame' in a number of unfamiliar cultures, and thus to make clearer where the similarities and differences lie between these and the interpretation of shame delineated as the 'western' concept earlier in this study, has been satisfied by the inclusion of a range of disparate ethnographic examples and various perspectives. Historically, in comparative anthropology, (particularly in the 'Mediterranean'), such comparison has tended to be limited to "societies that share a longstanding historical-linguistic tradition" (Brandes 1987:124) and anthropologists have largely been wary of global comparisons. However, it is possible that the juxtaposition of concepts deriving from geographically distant communities may be just as illuminating in assessing the extent to which (and precisely which) elements of 'shame' are shared or unique. As such, at this point an attempt will be made to highlight such areas of similarity or difference.

5.1 'Shame' and 'status'

One way in which some of the cultures resemble one another is in the apparent concern with shame in relation to 'status'. Allusion has already been made in the preceding text to the fact that in both Java and New Zealand, isin and whakamaa respectively are tied up with issues of the affirmation of status (kakuwatan batin/mana, to some extent seen as a subjective, fluid and negotiable quality) and respect by others. In Japan, the interpretation of status is somewhat different, emphasizing more objectively

determined, fixed social category[46], occupancy of such status and incongruency between it and the occupant's demeanour. Furthermore, the data on Catalonian vergonya suggest a similar preoccupation with meeting the obligations of one's role and status as a household member. In addition, as noted earlier, accounts of the 'western' concept of shame relate it to a more ambiguous meaning of status, having to do with 'worth' rather than 'role', and a reduction in it resulting from negative assessment by self and others.

It can be seen therefore, that although the data suggest that in a number of different cultures, shame is intimately linked with this issue of status, the way this concept is interpreted varies and thus has a differential effect on the related interpretation of 'shame' in this respect.

5.2 'Shame' and 'embarrassment'

There are similarities between the "exposure sensitivity" and "audience anxiety" of the Japanese and Javanese, and the fear of being "singled out" (for good or ill) of the Maori. However, in the first case, as Lebra identifies, this is due to the cultural demand for concealment of the 'self' behind prescribed roles and their attendant requirements, the risk of exposure of which causes the anxiety when publicly exhibited. In the Maori case, it is the demonstration of difference between oneself and others which results from being highlighted which creates the discomfort. The situation in Java more closely resembles the Japanese, both isin and hitomishiri apparently

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[46]But cf Metge (op cit:77) on one different Maori interpretation of mana in terms of 'status'.

expressing the same kind of diffidence in relation to strangers.[47]

5.3 'Shame' and 'responsibility'

The notion that not only need one not be personally responsible for the attribute or action inducing 'shame' on one's own behalf, but that one can feel shame for or on behalf of others with whom one is closely associated, appears to be present in all the examples of 'shame' concepts considered. What is cross-culturally variable, and which would appear to relate to matters of social organization, is the degree to which this 'shared shame' is emphasized. Thus, although in the 'west', as Thrane (op cit) points out,[48] one can still feel shame for one's family, country etc., this tends to be less common, and arguably less keenly felt, than shame on one's own behalf, whereas in those cultures where solidarity with various social groups is more salient than individual autonomy, the capacity for 'shared shame' is probably greater.

5.4 "Antecedent events" (Mesquita & Frijda op cit)

A number of the causes of shame appear to be similar in the cultures considered. Thus, for example, the whakamaa resulting from the perception of inadequacy or incapacity to act to some extent echoes the Piers/Rawlsian idea of shame as failure to meet standards of competence. However, such similarities do not render whakamaa and shame the same; witness the emphasis in the former on disparity and unfavourable

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[47]Cf also Buss (1980) on self-consciousness and social anxiety.

[48]Cf also Walsh 1970.

comparison between the 'self' and 'others', expressed in 'shame' at perceived inferiority - an aspect of shame which is rarely highlighted by writers in the 'western' philosophical and social scientific traditions.[49] In addition, public humiliation would seem to induce some kind of 'shame' in most cultures.

5.5 Reciprocity

The Andalusian example highlights a discrepancy in the perception of the relative significance of the reciprocity principle in shame and guilt between this region of Spain, and Japan and the 'west'. The emphasis in most 'western' accounts of guilt is on this idea of two parties in relationship requiring a balance or equilibrium in terms of rights and duties (cf e.g. Rawls op cit). This is echoed by both Lebra and Creighton in their discussions of 'shame' and 'guilt' in Japan. However, it will be recalled that for Andalusians, failure to maintain the requisite balance between oneself and one's opposite gives rise to 'shame', rather than 'guilt'.

5.6 Social organization

Certain issues relating to differences in social organization have already been alluded to. The significance of elitism in China identified by Ng, and the differential degree of state penetration of the household in Japan and Catalonia highlighted by Asano-Tamanoi represent further manifestations of the influence of social structure, mediated by cultural values, affecting the interpretation of 'shame'.

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[49]Though this of course does not preclude the experience of shame for this reason in 'westerners', it only suggests that this is not so explicitly culturally affirmed and validated as a source of shame as it is in Maori culture.

5.7 Resolution of 'shame'

Perhaps the clearest example of a cultural difference is that between the ways in which 'shame' is believed to be effectively discharged. In the 'west', it will be recalled, the emphasis is on the individual's own efforts in 'making good' the 'defects' s/he has demonstrated by replacing failure with success. Although this is an element in the resolution and 'healing' of Maori whakamaa, it is only appropriate in very specific circumstances, tends to take the form of restitution and 'payment' to the injured party,[50] and even then complete 'cure' is only achieved in conjunction with the help and support of others. There is thus quite a stark contrast, which clearly also relates to the differential value placed on individual autonomy and self-sufficiency on the one hand and social solidarity on the other.[51]

5.8 Conclusion

This survey of 'shame' abroad has provided an opportunity for the reconsideration of aspects of shame with which 'westerners' are familiar in the light of sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic differences (and similarities) evident in the concepts employed by people of other cultures. This limited exercise in cross-cultural comparison will be

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[50]A situation which in the 'west' tends to prevail in the case of guilt and remorse rather than shame, cf Taylor (op cit) on "repair work".

[51]cf Brandes (op cit) on the resolution of 'shame' in Monteros (Spain):"The individual who has been shamed, or who has acted shamelessly, has sufficient command over his or her life to be able to overcome the temporarily shameful condition. Shame, therefore, is an individual quality ... [t]he shamed or shameful person has to be perceived as existentially in command ..." (129).

supplemented in the next Chapter by a similar consideration of such potential examples of convergence or divergence between accounts of 'shame' originating in the work of a number of Continental philosophers in the previous century and the earlier part of this one, and that outlined in the first Part of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SHAME'S METAPHYSICAL SIGNIFICANCE: 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY VIEWS

1. Introduction

So far, the (philosophical) accounts of shame considered in this study have been limited to those originating in the latter half of the twentieth century. As already noted, such accounts treat shame almost exclusively as an emotion. In this respect, they resemble the 'traditional' accounts of shame as, variously, an impression, affect, etc., given by e.g. Aristotle, St. Thomas and Spinoza. However, such interpretations of shame focus on one level of this phenomenon only and as Rotenstreich notes,

> "... we may speak about <u>over-partialization</u> in this case ... some implications and presuppositions of shame are not sufficiently brought forward once we speak about the <u>feeling</u> of shame, though in the current usage nobody would argue against this presentation of the phenomenon." (1965:83)

However, it is not the distinction between the emotion of shame and the 'sense of' shame, identified in Chapter Three above, to which Rotenstreich refers. Rather, it is one between views of shame as an individual feeling or disposition and those which also see it as a fundamental feature of the general human situation.

Thus, in this Part, attention turns to accounts of shame given by certain philosophers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to considering the 'feeling' or 'sentiment' of shame, such thinkers also explore shame's ontological status and its significance in terms of ideas about the

nature of humanity's position in relation to the world and other beings, i.e., cosmological considerations. Such accounts thus represent a significantly different perspective on, and interpretation of, shame from those with which this study has previously been concerned and with which, arguably, contemporary philosophers (and social scientists) are most familiar. It is hoped that this inclusion of accounts of shame originating in a different philosophical tradition from the analytical approach which predominates in Anglo-American philosophy, i.e. the European phenomenological/existentialist tradition, will provide a further opportunity to demonstrate the differences and/or similarities in accounts of shame across cultures and historical periods.

1.1 Selection criteria

Those philosophers who considered shame in this period include Hegel, Nietzsche, Scheler and Sartre. In keeping with their more 'holistic' perspective on shame, identified above, their accounts tend to be more deeply embedded within their general philosophies than those of more contemporary thinkers, although the degree of such 'embeddedness' varies. For example, both Hegel and Nietzsche contemplated the significance of shame, but in a somewhat fragmentary way and as tangentially related to other issues of more central concern in their philosophies.[1] Thus, in order to

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[1]cf Emad (1972:370): "Nietzsche ... has profound insight into "shame" ... yet ... [it] is by no means an adequate and exhaustive account of this feeling. ... What attracts his attention is not shame qua shame ... he did not study shame as such but elaborated on shame's relevance to man's central concern with self-esteem." Also Schneider (1977:22): "... Nietzsche's comments on shame, while seemingly haphazard, occasional, and even contradictory, on closer reading emerge as intentional and consistent." For a comprehensive yet concise appraisal, see Schneider

extract their view of shame and relate it to their broader philosophical position, a considerable degree of specialist knowledge of their thought is really required. The current author is not such a specialist. As such, it is primarily a consideration of the work of Max Scheler, together with that of Jean-Paul Sartre (in both of which the discussion of shame is at least conducted more explicitly and systematically, making it easier to analyze) which will constitute the majority of this Chapter.

1.2 Methodology

Once again, it seemed most appropriate to consider individual authors' shame accounts in turn, before attempting to identify common themes, points of divergence etc. Thus, a summarized exegesis of the thinker's position will be presented, followed by a critique. The accounts will then be compared and contrasted, both in considerable detail with each other, and more generally with the contemporary accounts examined in Chapter One. Finally, their implications for, and any questions they raise concerning, the broader questions which this study as a whole seeks to explore (e.g., the universality/specificity of shame across cultures and historical periods) will also be considered.

Notwithstanding the above remarks concerning Hegel, since both Scheler and Sartre do, however, draw on his philosophy in the formulation of their own positions, in order to provide the background against

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(loc cit).

which the latter are situated, a condensed outline of the Hegelian view of shame will be given first.

2. Hegel[2]

As noted above, it is not possible with this author's level of expertise, nor within the context of this study, to explore Hegel's philosophy, within which his account of shame is situated, in detail. Nonetheless, as has already been argued above in connection with Taylor's criticisms of Sartre (Chapter One, subsection 8.2.1), a particular view of shame cannot be understood nor criticized without taking into consideration the context of the broader philosophical position of the commentator, since

> "... the description of the phenomenon of shame is interwoven in philosophical systems and interpreted according to the concepts of the respective systems." (Rotenstreich op cit:66).

It must suffice to note that:

> "... the general trend of Hegel's philosophy ... [is] ... the analysis of the dialectical movement from that which is immediately given to that which is reflectively mediated ..." (Rotenstreich op cit:61);

i.e., the transcendence of Nature by Spirit. For Hegel, shame is engendered when this gradual transcendence begins, at

> "The hour when man leaves the path of mere natural being ..." (Wallace 1892:57);

thus

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[2]Owing to the author's inability to read German, it was not possible to gain access to the original writings of either Hegel or Scheler. As such, references in the section on Hegel are to the English translation by Wallace (1892).

> "... the sense of shame bears evidence to the separation of man from this natural and sensuous life. The beasts never get so far as this separation, and they feel no shame." (ibid:56)

The meaning of shame, for Hegel, lies in its signification of the way in which nature is morally evaluated. Thus, dress (which is an expressional form of shame, cf Scheler op cit below) originates from the recognition by man of his dual nature as both animal and spirit (ibid). His spiritual nature being seen as his destiny, and evaluated more highly than his animal nature, clothing serves to conceal the body which is seen as symbolizing the latter, and thus as improper (Hegel 1955:684).[3]

3. Scheler[4]

3.1 Phenomenological method

Scheler's essay on shame is, those commenting on it note (cf Emad op cit; Hays Williams(1941/2);

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[3]The physical need for dress, presumably as protection for the body, is a secondary consideration (Wallace op cit:56).

[4]As noted above, this author does not read German. Since there exists no English translation of Scheler's essay (originally published in 1913), in this section, all quotations, as well as the author's (original) English translations and paraphrases, refer to the French translation by Dupuy (1952). The title of this translation, "La Pudeur", might suggest that the focus of Scheler's account is the "sense of", rather than the "emotion", shame ("honte" in French, as noted above in Chapter Three). However, although in large part Scheler is concerned with this aspect of shame, the original German title is in fact "Über Scham und Schamgefühle" (Scheler 1957), indicating that he also pays attention to feelings of shame. Indeed, as will become clear below, his lengthy Appendix is predominantly concerned with just this facet of shame and its relationship with other feelings. The French translation's title is thus perhaps misleading and somewhat inadequate, although presumably chosen to reflect the overall bias of Scheler's account.

Rotenstreich op cit), a good illustrative example of his general phenomenological approach. That is, empirical questions such as what gives rise to shame and what forms its expression takes, are put aside and attention is focused on elucidating its <u>essence</u>. In Scheler's own words:

> "in the phenomenological attitude ... what is meant... is intuited. It is not observed." (Scheler 1957:388, cited by Emad op cit:361)

That is, he explicitly rejects the methods of empirical science.[5]

Scheler's 'intuitive insights' concerning shame are achieved in a progressive way, beginning with an attempt to identify in general when and where shame is possible and to determine those conditions which are prerequisites for its occurrence. He concludes that shame, unlike certain other sentiments (such as fear, anxiety, disgust and even jealousy), is peculiar to the human species and cannot be felt by animals of a lower order. The reason for this is humanity's transcendence, through its more highly developed level of consciousness, of its purely animal nature (while remaining rooted in it) and the fact that humanity has awareness of a conflict between what is peculiar to itself (i.e. "l'esprit" - thinking , intuiting, desiring, loving) and that which it has in common with other animals and which differ only in degree - "les sentiments vitaux". Further, the feeling of shame is characterized by Scheler as grounded in an awareness of an opposition between some ideal and actual concrete reality:

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[5]Scheler was totally opposed to the "naturalistic conception of man and his works" and "his 'philosophical anthropology' was designed to provide an alternative" (Farber 1958:393).

> "conscience d'une opposition entre quelque 'devoir-etre' ideal et la realite effective'" (12),

that is, shame clearly has ethical connotations which prevent it being attributable to 'lower' animals. Further, shame is uniquely human and no more attributable to <u>higher</u> beings (i.e. the divine), because it is the tension arising from being <u>both</u> animal nature and 'higher consciousness' which creates shame; the divine, being purely spirit, do not experience this tension. Humanity is thus conceived of as a 'bridge' between "two orders of being" (and by virtue of being such a bridge is <u>bound</u> to feel shame, not merely capable of it).

<u>3.2. Bodily and spiritual shame</u>

Scheler makes a distinction between 'bodily' and 'spiritual' shame and states that the former is evolutionarily prior to the latter.

The organic conditions which precede the emergence of bodily shame are, according to Scheler, a high degree of individualization, a preference in reproduction for quality rather than quantity and in particular, where the sexual instinct, and the reproductive instinct in the strict sense, are separate from one another (21):

> "This separation is a condition sine qua non for the existence of a sense of sexual shame ... only where some individualization and some choice according to value can intervene in the reproductive process ... also only where the subordination of the procreative functions to an instinct of individual self-preservation occurs ... is the area delineated where a sexual [i.e. bodily] shame can arise." (ibid)

3.3 Characteristics of shame

However, he states that despite its ready association with things sexual, shame is not to be mistakenly thought of exclusively as a sexual phenomenon, nor is it, according to Scheler, exclusively social:

> "Il existe, aussi primordiales qu'une pudeur devant autrui, une 'pudeur devant soi-meme' et une 'honte a ses propres yeux'" (29).

This applies both to the 'bodily' and the 'spiritual' senses of shame.

In addition, shame is essentially a self-referential phenomenon:

> "... en tout mouvement de pudeur se produit un acte, qu'on peut nommer acte de 'retour sur soi'" (30).

Whilst it is a personal feeling involved in self-protection, shame is not, however, exclusively concerned with the self of the person experiencing it; it can be vicariously experienced. We can feel shame for others not as their behaviour reflects adversely on ourselves or on a third party, but on their behalf:

> "... ce qu'exprime tres nettement le reproche 'J'ai profondement honte pour toi devant toi-meme'" (34).

Shame is thus

> "un sentiment de culpabilite pour le Je individuel en general, qui n'est pas necessairement mon Je individuel propre, mais un Je individuel, ou qu'il soit donne, en moi ou en autrui." (ibid).

Further, according to Scheler, just 'to be seen' is not sufficient to provoke shame[6]; it is the way in which one is seen which is important. The occasion for shame is not when one believes oneself to be seen in one's individuality, nor when one believes oneself to

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[6]Cf Sartre on being seen (Section 4.3 below).

be seen as just an example of some generality, but when the way one is seen oscillates between these two (31).[7]

Because shame can be 'objectively' felt, it is, according to Scheler, an independent emotion which can be demanded by a state of affairs regardless of the existing emotional state of the self; it 'takes hold of' or 'invades' the self from without.

3.4. Origins of shame

'Bodily' shame and psychological shame are irreducible to one another and there is a very important difference between them; the former only requires the levels of "sensualite et du sentiment vital" for its experience, and is thus universal in human life in all stages of its evolution, whereas the latter presupposes the existence of a "personne spirituelle", which evidently is only a feature of humanity in its most highly developed form (51-2). It is the origins of bodily shame on which Scheler focuses.

3.4.1 Shame and education

Scheler criticizes the theory which views shame as a product of education and

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[7]This oscillation between individuality and generality explains the intimate connection between shame and sex. The latter, being that which humanity shares with all living things, is "the most general feature of our existence" (32), but at the same time it is also the most individual experience; it can thus be seen why, if shame concerns this tension between the individual and the general, the sphere of sex is one where its manifestation is highly probable.

> "instead of seeing in it [shame] one of the roots of morality [cf Aldrich op cit; Heller op cit; Thrane op cit], makes it the consequence of a 'moral education' which dominates in a society." (ibid).

Such a theory neither poses nor answers the question of from where the educators' own sense of shame is derived and this is one of its obvious weaknesses. Moreover, it rests on three fundamental confusions:

1. Confusion of the form of expression of shame (determined according to time and place and crystallized in custom) with the real expression itself;
2. Confusion of the natural expression of shame (e.g. blushing), with the artificial (e.g. bathing costume);
3. General confusion of the feeling of shame with its expression.

It is not education but tradition which determines the form of expression of shame in any society. However, tradition does not <u>create</u> the expressional forms of shame: it only transmits already 'given' forms (55). (These, according to Scheler, are genetically transmitted and only change

> "par le melange du sang" and "l'extension des relations genetiques entre sangs differentes" (ibid).)

Deviation from such a form automatically causes shame by drawing attention to the individual. Such forms may become 'empty' of the true feeling of shame, they are only

> "des formes mortes dont on fait encore usage sous la pression de l'inertie historique." (54).

Prudery is one such 'dead form' of shame and it is only this which education can influence, according to Scheler. Theories which attribute shame to education thus only confuse prudery for genuine shame.

3.4.2 Shame and sex

Despite the fact that by far the greatest single aspect of shame addressed by Scheler is its role and function in this respect, the intricacies of Scheler's intuitions concerning this will not be examined in detail here.

His main concern is to refute views of (sexual) shame (such as Freud's) which interpret it negatively, assuming that shame is a voluntary impulse, acting to repress the sexual instinct. In fact, Scheler maintains, shame is fed by the latter and the degree of shame felt is proportional to the strength of the sexual instinct. Given that this is so, shame cannot operate in the way such interpretations believe. The consequences of this view of shame are deleterious, according to Scheler. When it is seen as a repression of the libido, which it is believed gives rise to various health problems, the view naturally follows that shame should be eradicated. Scheler, however, sees in shame a positive and protective 'force', especially with respect to sexual matters.

3.5 Shamelessness

Shamelessness ("le cynisme") is generally believed to indicate a lack of any sense of shame but Scheler regards this view as mistaken. He sees shamelessness as the reaction of a living sense of shame against an empty expressional form. Similarly, obscenity requires a sense of shame but is not 'born of it' as shamelessness is. It aims to <u>offend</u> the sense of shame by shocking, but does not "deny" or "annihilate" that sense. Obscenity is most commonly found in societies in which tradition and education

have 'over-developed' shame and particularly where a rigid sexual morality exists.

3.6 Differences in shame between the sexes

Scheler also considers the differences between the sexes with respect to their susceptibility to shame and the type of shame which in his opinion is most readily associated with each.

He rejects both the idea that only one of the sexes originally possesses shame, from whom the other learns it, and also that there are quantitative differences between the shame each sex feels. (Such ideas again stem from confusion of shame's expressional forms with its essence.) Scheler claims that sexual shame is more prominent in women than in men by virtue of their more fundamental role in reproduction. As an instance of bodily shame this therefore suggests that it is the latter which characterizes the female, who is not so inclined to (or capable of) an awareness of the dichotomy of mind and body as the male and therefore less susceptible to psychological shame:

> "...chez la femme, l'activite spirituelle proprement dite - qui par principe n'est pas assujettie au service des instincts et des fonctions d'ordre vitale - est moins fortement et moins precisement degagee des fonctions biologiques..."; but
>
> "...la pudeur psychique a sa condition essentielle dans une conscience accusee de la distance qui existe entre l'esprit at l'ame vitale, entre la personne et l'organisme." (141)

Men, by contrast, do have such a consciousness and thus are possessed of a keener sense of psychological shame than women.

3.7 Shame and 'worth'[8]

Shame is not wholly negative and "does not only result from a consciousness of non-value" (145). However, in the act of feeling ashamed, such a consciousness is always present. An important feature of shame is also its resistance to "everything which calls attention too readily" (ibid) but this is neither shame's essence nor its predominant aspect:

> "It is rather the fear 1) of being an object; 2) of the image we have of ourselves being crushed by the image others have of us." (146). (cf Sartre op cit, below)

Shame thus seems to arise when the lowest level of one's individual value is focused on, because one tends to want always to be seen in terms of one's highest value.

Moreover,

> "shame is an affective state which implies or presupposes that we feel ourself as an object." (ibid).

This may be called the "value-image" of the self and it may be i) the image one has of one's own self or ii) that which others have of it. According to Scheler, the latter is probably originally prior.

3.8 Shame and honour

In view of the above, shame is related to honour in which "the image which others can have of us and the associated consciousness of a diminution of esteem and affection are predominant." But honour is a 'pressentiment' forcing us in advance "to present the image of a being and a conduct worthy of respect and

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[8]The French word is "valeur"; however, since Scheler's discussion of this involves numerous similarities with the Rawlsian concept identified in Chapter One, it seems appropriate to use this term.

love", not a feeling of having lost esteem in others' eyes.

> Scheler defines honour as:
>
> "the feeling of our special personal worth which holds the esteem of our fellowmen." (ibid; cf Rawls op cit).

When that esteem is lost, we reproach ourselves, by taking on our fellowmen's value-judgments and attitude towards ourselves. However, according to Scheler, this is not the same as feeling shame, which does not necessitate 'taking the other's point of view', but which occurs

> "when we[9] ourselves reproach our conduct." (ibid).

3.9 Shame and the self

Scheler considers that the sense of shame has been an obstacle to the psychological analysis of the self (48), which also plays an important role in shame. In his consideration of this, Scheler returns to the theme of the opposition between individuality and generality, claiming that the self can experience its feelings and ideas as uniquely its own. This occurs at the level of consciousness which is prior to '*self*-consciousness'.[10] Once the self detaches itself from these feelings and ideas it can *look at them* as its own (i.e. take an objective viewpoint). At this stage, however, it is possible to mistake our own self-generated ideas for those which we have in fact acquired from others, and vice versa. He then distinguishes the *person* from the *self*:

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[9]The fact that our self-reproval also coincides with the reproval of others vis a vis ourselves appears to Scheler to be incidental, not a necessary condition for shame.

[10]cf Sartre's "prereflective consciousness".

> "The person is a superconscious 'being' which exists in the accomplishment of its acts. It is never an 'object' as is the I and a fortiori the self. The self is a content of internal perception. The person rules the self." (151)[11]

Following from this, Scheler considers self-consciousness. This is

> "an immediate consciousness of the self as individual" (ibid).

An acute self-consciousness constitutes pride, being

> "reflective perception of one's own worth vis-a-vis the value of others",

and quite different from vanity, which is

> "reflection on the image others have of us."(ibid).[12]

The opposite of pride is modesty, which is different from and less than, humility, in which the self's value is always compared to that of a "superior model" and is thus perceived as mediocre. This comparison does not however necessitate looking outwards

> "towards the sphere of the not-me" (152),

as in pride. It can be an entirely self-contained exercise.

3.10 Critique

There are a number of aspects of Scheler's account of shame which raise questions as to their accuracy and/or adequacy.

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[11]Scheler's notions of person and self are explored more fully in his work "Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos" (The Place of Man in the Cosmos) (1928). (See Farber op cit:395)

[12]i.e. in pride, we evaluate ourselves, in vanity we submit to and rely on others' evaluation of us.

3.10.1 Method

Firstly, and fundamentally, the phenomenological method itself may be subjected to criticism. The 'intuitions' of individual philosophers may be sufficient (although even this is questionable) to determine the 'essence' of shame as it is understood in their own cultural experience, but to generalize from such (possibly idiosyncratic) intuitions to claim a universal characterization of shame is suspect. Scheler begins with the a priori assumption that shame is a constant phenomenon and dismisses cultural variations as only significant at a superficial level, viz., the expressional forms, interpretations etc. Thus, although he is sympathetic to the consideration of anthropological data in his essay, these are only used to illustrate and support his claims concerning the alleged confusion between genuine shame and its multiple manifestations.[13]

3.10.2. Origins of shame

When it comes to the origins of shame, Scheler's conclusions with reference to the role of education are again suspect, from a certain point of view. As indicated above, assuming 'genuine' shame to be constant, Scheler naturally takes the view that it is possible to mistake its expressional forms, interpretations etc for 'the real thing.' "Education", therefore, may affect the former but not the latter. However, a social constructionist (even a 'weak' one) would allow for some influence of

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[13]The question as to whether such cultural variations (in interpretation, for example) might have an effect on the actual nature of shame, and thus call its putative universality into doubt (as a social constructionist position would maintain), is thus naturally ignored by Scheler, given his assumptions.

acquired attitudes to and expressions of shame on the phenomenon itself. Thus, while the predisposition to shame may be a feature rooted in human existence (given our 'bridge'-like position), this does not necessarily imply that the way in which it operates or is understood is always and everywhere the same.

Naturally, the idea that the expressional forms of shame are genetically transmitted is also highly suspect, but within the historical context and framework of thought of the nineteenth century and the innovative and influential theories of evolution of Darwin etc., it is perhaps an understandable proposition for Scheler to make.

3.10.3 Differences in shame between the sexes

Scheler's attempt to ground differentials in shame between the sexes in terms of biology rather than socially-acquired gender must be viewed in the same way. It is possible that the female's reproductive role may serve to inhibit her from 'transcending' her animal nature to a greater extent than the male's, but this does not preclude her sensitivity to 'spiritual' or 'mental' shame in the way in which Scheler suggests, nor does it imply that the male can ever completely transcend his animality (for if he could, on Scheler's account, he would then be incapable of shame).

3.10.4 Shame and 'worth'

The Appendix, while addressing a number of highly relevant questions succinctly (perhaps too briefly and summarily), also contains certain contentious points. Again, relating to distinctions between emotions, his consideration of embarrassment, contrasted with shame,

seems vulnerable to criticism. Scheler maintains, (as does Taylor following him) that the essence of embarrassment is its paralysis of action (mental and physical). But does not this also occur in shame, in the idea that one is somehow frozen in the effort to draw no further attention? (cf Schneider). It may be that the attempt to hide oneself, characteristic of shame, <u>is</u> absent in embarrassment (as Scheler claims), but this does not imply that the response in embarrassment fulfils a different function, or indeed that the subject <u>feels</u> differently. Perhaps the idea that embarrassment is not so directly concerned with the self's status has some validity, and this is the crucial difference, but in view of the fact that in many other cultures, shame and embarrassment are <u>not</u> distinguished (they form lexical clusters, always occurring together, cf Levy 1984), it appears that the distinction is somewhat contrived.

In his return to the theme of pride and shame, Scheler claims that the former always involves a comparison of ourselves with others, while the latter does not. In this, he is close to Hume's thinking. However, this idea has been questioned by Taylor (op cit), who points out that the referent(s) for pride are aspects of the self and its achievements, attributes and appurtenances, which are exceptional - not in that the subject possesses them while others do not, but rather in that they are unusually remarkable in terms of the subject's own "norms of expectation". Thus, in feeling proud of something I have done (e.g. passed an examination), I may not compare myself to what others have done (they may all also have passed) but only to my own previous record of achievements (I may never have passed an exam before).

<u>3.10.5 Shame and the other</u>

Finally, Scheler seems to be guilty of making a glaring contradiction when he talks of our identification with the 'other's' point of view in shame (150). First he states that when we lose others' esteem, we take on their value-judgments of, and attitude towards, ourselves. This implies that we identify with their view of us. However, he goes on to say that this does not constitute shame, which requires self-reproach, apparently independently of what others think, although he seems also to imply that our own view and that of others will always coincide.

3.11 Evaluation

Scheler's phenomenological essay represents another example of an approach to the study of shame which attempts to isolate it from its social context and which explicitly rejects the utility of examining its expressional forms and interpretations. As such, it must be subjected to criticism, and the adequacy of his phenomenological method must be emphatically questioned. Notwithstanding the above comments, on the whole Scheler's study is fairly comprehensive. It must therefore be recognized as valuable for relating the phenomenon of shame to humanity's situation in the world, i.e., for highlighting metaphysical considerations and for addressing a wide range of questions concerning its origins, nature and functions, which, whilst the answers he gives may be criticized for their substantive content, it is important to ask.

4. SARTRE (1956)[14]

4.1. Introduction

Sartre's study of shame is the reverse of Scheler's. That is, rather than undertaking a specific consideration of shame which also includes an assessment of its ontological significance, Sartre - as his subtitle, "An essay on phenomenological ontology", clearly states - attempts to provide a phenomenology of being, in which the discussion of shame features as a demonstration of two fundamental aspects of this ontology, namely, the 'proof' of the existence of the Other and the role of this Other in the constitution of individual being. Indeed, Sartre's description of the phenomenon of shame is so closely bound up with his exploration of the question of intersubjectivity that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to isolate it from this context without thus obliterating its meaning as understood by Sartre (cf the discussion of Taylor's misinterpretation of him in Chapter One above). Thus, while it was also necessary when examining the previous views of shame to bear in mind the philosophical context in which its discussion occurred (without however having to consider it in detail), in Sartre's case it is perhaps even more essential.

4.2 "Being-For-Others"

The first part of Sartre's study is concerned with identifying two fundamentally different types of beings which 'inhabit' the world, "Beings-in-themselves" and "Beings-for-themselves", and exploring the relationship between them. Broadly, the

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[14]References throughout this section are to the English translation of Sartre's work.

distinction between the two types may be summarized thus:

> "Beings-in-themselves are non-conscious things, which can be said to have essences, which exist independently of any observer and which constitute all the <u>things</u> in the world.
> Beings-for-themselves are conscious beings whose consciousness renders them entirely different from other things, in their relation both to themselves and to one another, and to those other things." (Warnock 1993:ix)

As noted above, one of Sartre's main reasons for discussing shame is to demonstrate that humans have another 'mode' or 'structure' of existence in addition to 'Being-for-Itself', which is 'Being-for-Others':

> "... we have discovered that human reality is-for-itself. Is this <u>all</u> that it is? Without going outside our attitude of reflective description, we can encounter modes of consciousness which seem, even while themselves remaining strictly in for-itself, to point to a radically different type of ontological structure." (Sartre op cit:221)

Irrespective of whether it is <u>possible</u> to be ashamed in the absence of any concrete Other (which Sartre concedes:ibid), <u>originally and initially</u> shame is created by a Being-for-itself being seen by a not-self, i.e., an Other:

> "... shame is not originally a phenomenon of reflection ... it is in its primary structure shame <u>before somebody</u>." (ibid, original emphasis)

This 'new' structure is <u>created</u> by the other:

> "This being was not in me potentially before the appearance of the Other..." (222)

<u>4.3. The genesis of objective self-awareness</u>

The way in which I am seen by the Other is of crucial importance. Firstly, when an Other looks at or sees me, it is as an <u>object</u> that I am viewed. This engenders objective self-awareness in me; by virtue of

my being seen as an object by another, I too am able to see myself as an object, which was impossible prior to the appearance of the Other (i.e. in the modes of pre-reflective and reflective consciousness). Secondly, the way I am seen corresponds to the way I <u>am</u>; it is not a false view of me which the Other has, otherwise it will not create shame but may arouse irritation or anger (222). Shame requires congruence between appearance and reality:

> "Shame is by nature <u>recognition</u>. I recognize that I <u>am</u> as the Other sees me." (ibid, original emphasis)

There is an irreconcilable split between the two structures of one's being (the For-itself and the For-others):

> "There is ... no question of a comparison between what I am for myself and what I am for the Other as if I found in myself, in the mode of being of the For-itself, an <u>equivalent</u> of what I am for the Other." (ibid, emphasis added)

which amounts to a destruction of one's previous inner unity. Most importantly, according to Sartre, this "new type of being" (ibid) is given precedence over the For-itself:

> "The For-itself refers to the For-others." (222);

thus we

> "...give[n] primacy to the object which we are to Others over the subject we are to ourself." (Sartre 1988:32)

and see ourselves through eyes other than our own.

The feeling of shame is therefore not merely a <u>reaction</u> to being seen and thus objectified by the Other; shame itself <u>is</u> the experience of losing one's subjectivity and thus one's freedom. This objectification and the loss of subjectivity and freedom inherent in it constitutes a constant <u>threat</u>;

thus, intersubjective relations are characterized by Sartre as hostile. (cf Part Three, Chapter Three: 'Concrete Relations with Others'.)

4.4 The Existence of the Other

Notwithstanding the remarks made in the opening paragraph of this Section, since a full exposition and criticism of Sartre's theory of the alter ego is beyond the scope of the present study[15], an attempt will be made to outline only those features of his theory of intersubjectivity on which the experience of shame bears directly.

Like Husserl, Hegel and Heidegger before him, Sartre seeks to address the problem of solipsism, i.e.

> "... a scepticism about or a failure to account for knowledge of other people." (Hammond et al op cit:205).

His method, following Husserl, is to

> "... describe the phenomena which give rise to certainty that other subjects exist." (ibid:228).

One such phenomenon is the experience of shame.

Sartre seeks to show that my being, in its own being, implies the Other's being. Because I have a structure of being which is created by the Other (i.e. Being-for-others), which, as demonstrated above, is exemplified in the experience of shame, and because

> "... I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being" (222),

therefore

> "I cannot doubt [the Other] without doubting myself."(237)

Thus, the concrete example of an experience of shame given by Sartre is intended to show that since shame

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[15]This may be found in e.g. Schuetz 1948

entails awareness of others, through this experience their existence is thus confirmed:

> "Anyone may recognize ... that immediate and burning presence of the Other's look which has so often filled him with shame. In other words, in so far as I experience myself as looked-at, there is realized for me a trans-mundane presence of the Other. ... By the Other's look I effect the concrete proof that there is a 'beyond the world'." (270)

Shame is thus at the same time the means whereby one of the structures of one's own being (i.e. Being-for-others) is constituted and the means by which Beings-for-themselves know or become aware of, the existence of Others.

4.5 Shame as the "primordial status" (Rotenstreich op cit:80)

It can be seen from the foregoing that for Sartre, shame is not a phenomenon which refers merely to acts of an agent and their actual or potential evaluation by others (as is the case in conventional accounts), but rather one which reflects the situation of each individual human's status as an object for others:

> "Shame is the consciousness of being irremediably what I always was ... Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object but in general of being an object; that is, of recognizing myself in this degraded, fixed and dependent being which I am for the Other." (288)

Thus, as Rotenstreich points out (op cit:77-80), Sartre "totalizes" the phenomenon of shame by taking this inherent aspect of evaluation (which itself implies dependence on the opinion of the Other) and interpreting it as descriptive of the total situation of the human being's involvement in the world:

> "I am evaluated; hence I am an object, fixed and thus degraded." (op cit:78)

As such, in Sartre's account, the interpretation of shame is not situated in "the realm of deeds" but in "the realm of status" (op cit:80), which status is seen by Sartre as an original one.

4.6 Critique

There are a number of points on which the validity of Sartre's account may be questioned.

4.6.1 The role of the Other

A critical discussion of Sartre's views on the role of the Other in shame was undertaken in Chapter One, in the context of considering Taylor's account of shame. The conclusion of this discussion, it will be recalled, was that Sartre correctly identifies consciousness of self before the Other as the original source of shame. Taylor's assumption that he therefore implies that the presence of another (real or imagined) is necessary in every experience of shame was however contested, on the basis that by considering Sartre's account in abstraction from his general ontology, she thus misinterprets his position.

4.6.2 Identification with the Other's view of oneself

Similarly, the question as to whether in shame the person experiencing it necessarily shares the Other's view of herself (as Taylor understands Sartre to imply) was explored. It was concluded that endorsement of this view is not implied by Sartre, only that recognition and acceptance of the apparent validity of such a view is required in shame.

4.6.3 The hostile nature of human interaction

According to Sartre,

> "... all relations with others are based on confrontation and conflict." (Hammond et al op cit:227)

As indicated above, Sartre considers that the evidence for this view lies in the loss of freedom entailed in being objectified by the Other. Whether or not such a view of intersubjective relations is accurate is however questionable. As Shouery notes, while there is in one's encounter with another potentially "a hope for affirmation and authentication", such a possibility is excluded by Sartre. It is excluded because Sartre can see no possibility of genuinely intersubjective relations. However, the grounds on which Sartre's position is based (i.e. that a relationship between two individuals as subjects is impossible) is untenable. As Schutz points out:

> "In the mundane sphere of everyday life I conceive myself as well as the Other as a center of activity, each of us living among things to be handled, instruments to be used, situations to be accepted or changed. ... What is relevant to the Other, what is within his reach, certainly does not coincide with what is relevant to me and within my reach, if for no other reason than that I am "Here" and he is "There." Yet recognizing that the Other lives in a setting not defined by me does not transform him into my utensil. He remains within his situation (as defined by him) a center of activity; I can understand him as being not me, his activities as being not mine, his instruments as being beyond my reach, his projects as being outside my accepted possibilities." (op cit:198)

Thus, in everyday life we do experience each other as subjects. Indeed, the phenomenon of conversation, involving simultaneously utterance by one and interpretation by another and vice versa, presupposes such intersubjectivity (ibid:199). Thus, Sartre's

assumption that the subjectivity of the Other negates one's own subjectivity, is faulty.

Shouery argues that it is Sartre's own experience of being dictated to and dominated by others which is responsible for his particular characterization of human interaction as hostile:

> "Sartre confuses the psychological experience with ontological reflection and considers whatever man experiences psychologically as an ontological mode of being-in-the-world. For this reason ... his psychological awareness of the other and of the world can hardly be separated from his ontology. Sartre ontologizes his psychological states and attempts to universalize what is psychologically given." (1971:57)

5. Comparison of metaphysical accounts

In this section, various similarities and differences between certain aspects of the preceding accounts will be considered. In addition, a comparison of their general approach to the phenomenon of shame with that of contemporary philosophers, will be made.

5.1 Shame and the other

In Hegel's account, the 'other' hardly features as a relevant element in the experience of shame. Although he does not explicitly deny the other's relevance, the emphasis is on

> "the self-transcendence of man and the self-productive character of spirit" (Rotenstreich op cit:62).

By contrast, Scheler and Sartre both recognize a significant role for the 'other', but disagree strongly on what might be called the 'original nature' of shame. As noted above, Scheler firmly states that shame is not an exclusively social phenomenon:

> "Il existe, aussi primordiales qu'une pudeur devant autrui, une 'pudeur devant soi-meme'" (op cit:29, emphasis added).

Conversely, Sartre, as the previous section has shown, regards shame not as merely aroused but indeed created by 'the other', in that it is our being objectified by 'the other' which is responsible for our feeling shame:

> "... shame is not originally a phenomenon of reflection ... it is in its primary structure shame before somebody." (op cit:221)

However, elsewhere Scheler does state that shame implies a consciousness of the self's worth as object (146-7), the self-image being our own or that which others have of us and that

> "this second case is perhaps that which enjoys original priority."

Does not this then contradict his earlier claim and imply that our potential for 'solitary' shame arises later than (and is possibly even derived from) 'shame-before-others', as Sartre maintains?

This question of objectification is the basis of a further difference between Scheler and Sartre, which relates to Scheler's concept of the 'person'. For Scheler, what distinguishes humanity from the rest of the living world is, as noted above, its possession of 'spirit'[16], and

> "The act-center, in which spirit appears within finite spheres of being, is called a 'person'..." (Farber op cit:395)[17].

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[16]"The term 'spirit' ... is supposed to comprise the concept of reason, the intuition of essences, and goodness, love, etc." (Farber op cit:395)

[17]Cf also Scheler op cit:151; see above.

Moreover,

> "... Scheler regards spirit as the only being that is itself not capable of being an object. ... The center of spirit, the person, is therefore neither being as an object nor as a thing, but only an essentially determined, ordered structure of acts. Other persons are also not capable of being objects." (ibid)
>
> Cf Emad (op cit:369):
>
> "While everything can become an object for an act, act itself can never become an object."

Clearly, such a view directly contradicts Sartre's contention that all relations between Beings-for-themselves are "subject-Object" relations (cf Broucek op cit) and that indeed, it is our fundamental objectification by the Other which is the source of shame.

5.2. The ontological significance of shame

One of the major important differences between Hegel, Scheler and Sartre clearly concerns the ontological status of shame. For Hegel, man becomes ashamed because Spirit begins to transcend Nature; and it is in this separation that shame is engendered.

For Scheler, whilst humanity's unique position between the 'animal' and the 'divine' is seen as the condition for our potential to feel shame (and in all probability thus creates in us a ready propensity or disposition towards shame), shame is <u>not</u> regarded as a persistent state. However, according to Sartre (given the pivotal role which he accords to the Other in the creation of shame), by virtue of our existence in a world peopled by others, we are inevitably in a constant and total 'state' of shame.

A further comparison may be made between the three philosophers on the ontological status of shame. As already indicated, Hegel's entire philosophy embodies an anticipation of the eventual transcendence of nature by spirit, of which shame is an exemplary phenomenon. This transcendence may be thought of as a state of harmony. By contrast, whereas Scheler also sees shame as indicative of the tension between nature and spirit, this tension is seen as inherent in humanity's unique 'cosmological' situation, between the animals and the gods, and therefore permanent.

Although Sartre's account of shame takes a somewhat different perspective, there is nonetheless a similarity with Scheler's. His recognition that there is no possibility of escaping (through transcendence or any other means) the relation with the Other in the constitution of Being may be compared with Scheler's resignation to the immanent disharmony of humanity's place in the cosmos.

5.3 The ethical evaluation of shame

At this point, it may be asked what effect the different perspectives on the nature of shame exemplified in the accounts examined in this Chapter have on the way in which shame is evaluated morally. Chapter Three explored the question of shame's moral value according to some contemporary philosophers and social scientists. In this subsection, therefore, it will be illuminating to explore not only the ethical evaluation of shame in earlier accounts but also to compare this with the contemporary debate.

As noted above, inherent in Hegel's view of the transcendence of nature by Spirit is a moral evaluation of nature. It was shown that the

experience of shame is the situation in which the superior evaluation of the spiritual over the animal is demonstrated. Implicit in this evaluative schema is the idea that 'nature' is what man 'is', while spirit is what he 'ought to be', aspires to, and eventually, will become. Nonetheless, since shame occurs at the point at which this transcendence of nature by spirit <u>begins</u>, in Hegel's account:

> "As a beginning of spiritual and reflective existence, shame is a beginning <u>only</u>; it is a beginning also of the ethical attitude ..." (Rotenstreich op cit:63)

Thus, it is not considered an ethical phenomenon <u>in itself</u>.[18]

The tension between this 'is' and 'ought' is also clearly brought out in Scheler's account (cf pp 223-224 above), in his assertion that in shame is embodied an awareness of an opposition between actual reality and aspiration.

The ethical significance of shame is not explicitly discussed by Sartre. However, in view of his rendering of shame as fundamentally an ontological phenomenon, and thus its "totalization", it may be said that in his account, the primary ethical connotation of shame is extinguished (cf Rotenstreich op cit:79).

<u>5.3.1 Comparison with contemporary evaluations of shame</u>

Both Chapter Three and the present Chapter have indicated that shame may be variously interpreted as

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[18]A distinction, between interpretations of shame such as Hegel's, which view it only as a "prelude towards the ethical attitude" (ibid:67), and those which see it as ethical in itself, will be considered below.

i) an emotion or 'feeling'; ii) a disposition or attitude (i.e. the 'sense of' shame); iii) a complex phenomenon with many dimensions, one of which is its significance in terms of ontology. How shame is evaluated ethically depends on which of these interpretations is placed on it.

As already stated, the primary interpretation of shame in contemporary accounts, as in 'traditional' accounts, is as an emotion or feeling. Since in the majority of theories of emotions, these are seen as transitory episodes in psychic life, rather than chronic states of mind, the tendency is to conclude that emotions in themselves cannot be characterized as ethically desirable character traits or 'virtues'. This does not, however, imply that shame cannot be regarded as 'good', but rather that it cannot be so regarded in itself, only as a means to an end which is good. Thus, since (in traditional accounts at least) the capacity for shame is regarded as preferable to shamelessness, and indicates the agent's commitment to certain values (such as 'honour'), it is good.

In addition to this evaluation of shame as good or bad, it is clear from the foregoing that whereas most of the 'metaphysical' accounts[19] regard shame's status as the basis of the 'ethical attitude' as one of its most fundamental features, for many contemporary philosophers this aspect of shame is not considered.[20] Similarly, any possible role for emotions such as shame is rarely discussed in analyses

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[19]With the possible exception of Sartre, as discussed above.

[20]However, cf the views of e. g. Aldrich (op cit) and Thrane (op cit), discussed in Chapter Three.

of ethics.[21] Such omissions seriously distort the consideration of ethics, since to ignore the affects' status as the ground of morality is effectively to miss the point.

6. Summary and conclusion

There are three major themes running through these 'metaphysical' accounts of shame, which, although each is not necessarily given emphasis by every thinker, nonetheless highlight a number of 'problematics' encountered in the consideration of shame.

Firstly, there is the idea that shame is characteristic of a distinction and tension between the two aspects of humanity's nature, as both animal and human. This is given expression by both Hegel and Scheler.

Secondly, there is the question of the relationship between "I" and "the Other" exemplified in the experience of shame, considered exhaustively by Sartre and to a limited extent by Scheler.

Thirdly, the significance of shame as the basis of the 'ethical attitude', identified by both Hegel and Scheler and discussed in the previous subsection, represents another question for dispute.

Finally, an additional consideration is that of methodology in the analysis of shame. Perhaps the main issue in this respect is the value or otherwise

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[21] cf the exceptions noted in the Introduction, e.g. Blum (op cit) and Williams (op cit), and more recently, Oakley (1992).

of approaches such as Scheler's phenomenology.[22] As noted in the section on Scheler, there are both advantages and disadvantages inherent in this method. As already discussed, whilst phenomenological description and reflection may be valuable in focussing on important aspects of shame, in disregarding the social context in which shame is experienced it excludes a significant and highly relevant area altogether. However, irrespective of the degree of attention paid to social context in these accounts, in considering the metaphysical implications of shame they do nonetheless represent a more holistic approach than the extremely atomistic tendencies of contemporary accounts exemplified by authors such as Taylor (op cit).

It has been shown that one of the major distinctions between the views of shame considered in the first Chapter(s) of this study and those examined here is that the latter, for various reasons, see shame as inherent in the nature of the human situation, whereas the majority of more modern views of shame see it only as an arbitrary emotional property of individuals, which they may or may not experience.[23]

In contrast to the perspective of the accounts presented in this Chapter, therefore, the contemporary interpretation of shame might be appropriately characterized as a 'liberal' one.

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[22]This will be discussed further below, in Chapter Six.

[23]cf Brandes (op cit:129; see Chapter Four, n.51) for an explicit expression of this view of shame as requiring the "existential control" of the individual, particularly for its supercedence.

PART THREE

'PROMISING' POSSIBILITIES

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the Introduction, it was stated that in this Chapter, some attempt would be made to decide, on the basis of the substance of the study, what would appear to be the most 'promising' way to study shame.[1] Clearly, such an evaluative decision is significantly influenced by a variety of more or less subjective factors. As Mesquita and Frijda have remarked (albeit in the context of discussing on which 'component element' of the 'emotion process' researchers should concentrate):

> "It is a complex issue to decide which level of description is interesting and in what respect." (op cit: 199).

Since in the case of shame it is not merely the degree of interest which is in dispute, but more pertinently the degree of <u>importance</u> and even 'usefulness' of the approach which is being assessed, this question is perhaps even more complex. Thus, should research into emotions generally, and shame in particular, be for its own sake or should it have a <u>purpose</u>?; for example, can what is learned from shame research be used beneficially for moral purposes, in deciding whether it should be encouraged or discouraged?[2]

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[1]This is not to imply that there is a 'right' or a 'wrong' approach; the multiplicity of disciplines and the diverse perspectives and methodologies both within and between them inevitably yield a variety of data which are equally valid. However, the issue is to determine which kind of data has the greatest relevance for the purpose.

[2]cf Armon-Jones (1986a: 35) on the implications of social constructionism for practical ethics, i.e., the cultural pre- and proscription of certain emotions.

In addition, it is clear that both of the major debates concerning shame explored in the first Part of this study are closely allied to, or even arise directly from, the differences in approaches adopted by the respective sides. For example, the question concerning to what extent emotions are universal or culture-specific is inevitably answered differently by those whose approach (whether strictly phenomenological or more loosely, as in the interpretation indicated in Chapter One) focuses on 'common denominators' in 'shame' experiences and by those who emphasize those aspects which are apparently culture-dependent and therefore potentially different.[3]

Likewise, as was indicated in Chapter Three, the ethical evaluation of shame is dependent on whether it is conceptualized as an emotion, an attitude or disposition, or a virtue, i.e., on whether it is viewed as primarily a psychological attribute or a moral quality.

Some attempt to reach conclusions concerning the issues examined in each Part or Chapter has already been made in the text of the dissertation. The following, therefore, will not attempt to draw overall conclusions, except where appropriate, but will summarize and evaluate each of the approaches examined in the course of this study in turn and consider its general utility. In addition, given the relationship between the various approaches and debates, each of the latter will be assessed in conjunction with those

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[3]cf Averill (1985:97): "When analyzing a complex phenomenon ..., there is always a danger of emphasizing first one component and then another, depending upon the thesis one wishes to defend."

approaches which have engendered it, and on the basis of the data considered.

6.1 Philosophical analysis and 'phenomenology'

The way in which emotions in general are conceptualized influences, if not determines, the way in which research into any given emotion is conducted.[4] Thus, the prevailing tendency in philosophy (until relatively recently) to regard emotions as permanent and inherent 'natural' human characteristics inevitably led to a concentration on 'essences'. Despite the acceptance and integration of cognitive and 'judgmentalist' theories of emotion (identified in the Introduction) and the consequent modification of the earlier 'model' of emotions, the methodology in philosophy has remained much the same. Thus, Taylor's account of shame, which was identified as a paradigmatic example of the attempt to lay bare the bones of the concept by delineating a constant set of beliefs operative in every single case, is in some respects a repetition of Scheler's account (if not, in fact, a more sterile one). Whether or not her context-independent account is accurate, by excising all consideration of the circumstances in which shame is experienced and the kinds of situations which engender it, Taylor succeeds in rendering an account which is almost devoid of meaning. As more than one commentator has noted (cf e. g. Deigh 1988; Rosaldo 1983), it is precisely the cultural component in shame experience which makes it problematic. Thus, the conclusions reached as a result of such an approach may be true, but are of little use for the purpose of assessing shame's significance, moral evaluation etc.

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[4]See Lutz (op cit:53-80) for an excellent "exploration of the concept of emotion as a master cultural category in the West." (54).

Moreover, as noted during the course of Chapter One, contemporary philosophers tend to concentrate on the analysis of shame as it appears to them, in terms of their own experience, intuitions and limited observations of others' experience of shame.[5] Such 'parochialism' in shame analysis is justifiable if there is recognition of its limited applicability. However, the tendency to universalize (implicitly or otherwise) from the conclusions reached is widespread. In accordance with the general view of emotions, the assumption appears to be that shame's characteristics are universal and therefore unproblematic. There is little, if any, explicit consideration of other cultures.

6.2 Eidetic analysis & empirical phenomenology

The above criticism applies perhaps even more strictly to the kind of genuinely phenomenological analysis undertaken by, for example, Scheler. Husserlian eidetic analysis relies on the intuitive experience of the Ego. However, such an approach, eschewing as it does the utilization of pre-existing concepts and requiring the suspension of received ideas about the phenomenon under investigation (in this case shame), would seem to represent a potentially valuable entree into the mode of experiencing of 'shame' of individuals in other cultures. Thus, whilst there is a seeming contradiction between the professed aims of eidetic analysis (i.e. the discovery of the 'essential properties' of a phenomenon) and the project of establishing whether and what differences exist in the experience of 'shame' cross-culturally, it appears

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[5]It may be argued that the use of examples from literature goes some way towards substantiating the claims made by individual philosophers.

that adoption by anthropologists of the kind of phenomenological methodology employed by Ablamowicz, for example (based on the methods of Merleau-Ponty [1962] and Lanigan [1977,1988]), could furnish just the kind of data such a project requires.

6.3 Psychoanalysis

As noted in Chapter Three, the psychoanalytical approach in general is concerned with the exploration of the unconscious, the uncovering of the 'hidden', and the bringing to light of unresolved issues buried in the psyche. With regard to shame, the focus is on the implications of its repression and denial, primarily for the individual, and the prevalent psychoanalytical interpretation of shame and the overall bias in discussions of this emotion in the discipline, is towards its negative characteristics and functions and its impediment of the 'healthy' integration and functioning of the personality. Thus, probably the major drawback of the psychoanalytical approach is its preoccupation with pathological shame, and its neglect of the role shame may normally play.

In addition, whilst all the disciplinary perspectives, models and approaches to shame considered in this study have been engendered in culturally and historically specific circumstances, and thus from one point of view may be considered to have potentially limited utility and applicability to the understanding of 'shame' other than in our 'own' culture, psychoanalysis is particularly susceptible to such a criticism. This is because although an advantage of much psychoanalytical work on shame is its reliance on empirical data gathered directly from clients in the course of therapeutic encounters, the interpretation of such data is framed largely in terms

of the psychoanalytic model derived primarily from Freud.

The overall conclusion is that while the psychoanalytical approach highlights a number of important and valid issues concerning the experience of shame in 'western' culture, in accordance with its general perspective its conclusions concerning the value of shame are necessarily skewed. It cannot therefore be employed as a paradigmatic model, but requires to be considered in conjunction with other models and explanations of both the usual role of shame and its potential individual, social and moral value.

6.4 'Social Constructionism' and psychological anthropological empirical studies.

In Chapter Two, it was noted that a prerequisite of the social constructionist theory of emotions was acceptance of the idea of emotions as, in part at least, cognitions. One of the earliest proponents of such a theory of emotions, it will be recalled, is Averill (op cit), whose portrayal of emotions as "syndromes" identified them as:

> "an organized set of responses (behavioral, physiological, and/or cognitive)"

in which

> "no single response is a necessary or sufficient condition for the entire syndrome ..." (1985:98)

The social constructionist theory of emotions builds on this view, attempting to demonstrate that aspects of social structure and organization, mediated by cultural values, constitute the subjectivities (such as self and feeling) of individuals (cf Rosaldo 1984:150). Psychological anthropological and cultural

psychological accounts of 'shame' in non-'western' cultures are therefore concerned with identifying and explicating the precise ways in which this relationship affects the interpretation and operation of 'shame'.

As noted in Chapter Two (section 4), the value of the constructionist approach to 'shame' lies in its recognition of the significance of contextual factors in its conceptualization and experience. This renders it a more realistic method for understanding such an emotion and concept, given the clear relevance of such factors, than the 'essentialist' structural analysis employed by Taylor for example, which eliminates them. Nonetheless, as was identified earlier, whilst it may be an especially appropriate way in which to approach the study of '<u>shame</u>', cultural constructionism in particular cannot adequately account for all aspects of general emotional experience. It may not therefore be useful to exclusively employ such an approach when attempting to understand emotions in which culture plays a less obviously crucial role (such as fear), or to accept its claims with respect to the constitution of all emotional experience.

6.5 Psychology: the cognitive process model of emotions

The model of emotions as multi-component cognitive processes, adopted by Mesquita & Frijda (op cit) in their review of the psychological and anthropological literature on cultural variations in emotions and outlined in Chapter Two above, is in many ways a development and refinement of Averill's model (despite the lack of any citation of the latter's work) but without its commitment to a master role for sociocultural factors in the constitution of emotion. As noted in Chapter Two, it thus appears to offer the

best of both worlds in terms of the seemingly unsettlable dispute between 'phenomenologists' (and 'naturalists') and 'social constructionists' as to the universality or otherwise of emotions, by allowing for the cultural influence on (or even possibly determination of) certain aspects of emotion, while accepting that other aspects appear to be physiologically or neurologically grounded and more or less impervious to external factors.

If this model were to be adopted, by breaking down reports of the experience of shame by informants into their constituent parts, anthropologists or cross-cultural psychologists could thus assess the extent to which each of the various components of an emotion is subject to cultural variation or is apparently cross-culturally similar. As such, the value of this model as a heuristic device in the comparison of 'western' shame with other-cultural 'shames' would appear to be considerable.

6.6 The universality or cultural specificity of emotions in general and shame in particular

6.6.1 Emotions in general

As Mesquita and Frijda's review shows, the debate as to the universality or cultural specificity of emotions is not confined to the two major theoretical protagonists with which this study has been concerned but is widespread and ongoing amongst researchers in a number of disciplines in the social sciences.[6]

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[6]cf e.g. Wallbott & Scherer (op cit); Wierzbicka (1986).

As noted in Chapter Two, given their view of emotion-as-process, the authors conclude on the basis of their review that:

> "... global statements about cross-cultural universality of emotion, or about their [sic] cultural determination, are inappropriate." (op cit:198).

This is because even if similarities appear to exist between certain emotional elements across cultures, these frequently co-exist with differences in other elements.[7]

A further thesis which undermines the debate and suggests that it may be impossible to reach an unequivocal conclusion, is that of Levy (op cit). In the light of much of the ethnographic evidence, Levy's hyper-/hypocognition thesis (outlined in Chapter Three above) appears to have considerable validity. That is, underlying the apparently considerable variation in aspects of emotion categorization and experience across cultures, it seems plausible that humans everywhere have the potential capacity for a number of 'generic' emotions, which are either developed or not according to the socio-economic, cultural and political environment and the availability of such emotions permitted by this environment. Moreover, the cultural 'transformations' of these emotional potentialities can be so significantly different that talk of 'universal emotions' appears inaccurate.

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[7]Thus, possibly, affecting both the overall and the contextual meaning of each element. Cf Averill:

> "The components that make up a complex phenomenon are seldom unique to, or found only in connection with, that phenomenon ... if some of these [components] undergo change, then the properties of the whole may also change - not in some superficial sense, but fundamentally so." (1985:97)

Furthermore, the reductionism of the 'universal structure' thesis (exemplified in Taylor's account) implicitly necessitates going further, to physiological 'base-lines'. However, once this level of analysis and comparison is reached, the question is if anything harder to determine, since it is doubtful whether on this basis, shame for example could be distinguished from other 'emotions', such as terror. As noted earlier, it is because shame is such a sociocultural context-dependent concept that the different cases and circumstances of shame cannot be disregarded.

Thus, although apparently neither side in the debate can justifiably claim to have an unequivocal answer to the question, the general conclusion would seem to be that cultural influence on aspects of emotional experience is of considerable significance.

6.6.2 Shame

Given limitations of space and the fact that the purposes of this study are less specific, it is not the intention here to attempt a detailed cross-cultural comparison between shame and some of the other apparently equivalent concepts described elsewhere in this work, although some limited degree of such comparison has already taken place, for example in Chapter Four (section 5).[8] However, the general conclusion to emerge from the consideration of these is that as noted above, the degree of significance of cultural influence in this particular emotion and concept is considerable, suggesting that although some capacity for shame may well be

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[8]The achievement of such a project would require an extensive study of its own and it is hoped this will be undertaken in the future.

universal, the precise way in which it manifests itself, and the preoccupations with which issues of 'shame' are concerned, are likely to be importantly different depending on the nature of the "encompassing social formations" (Rosaldo 1984:149).

6.7 The relationship between the concept of 'shame' and the self-concept

As noted in the Introduction, this issue is a subsidiary one in relation to the question of 'shame's' universality or otherwise, and it has not been possible to explore the nature of the relationship in detail. However, some limited conclusions do emerge from the consideration of cross-cultural differences in conceptualization of the 'self' (see Chapter Two).

Whereas, as Obeyesekere (op cit) points out, it may be inappropriate to talk of 'selves' at all, it does appear that

> "... whereas the affect 'shame' may everywhere concern investments of the individual in a particular image of the self, the ways that this emotion works depends on socially dictated ways of reckoning the claims of selves and the demands of situations." (Rosaldo 1984:149)

6.8 The contemporary social and moral significance and value of shame

A distinction has to be made when reaching conclusions as to the status of the above debate, between the more objective, empirically determinable question as to whether shame is still a significant element in the emotional experience of late twentieth century 'western' individuals on the one hand, and the more subjective assessment as to shame's status in

relation to morality, and its individual and social desirability and utility, on the other.

These questions have already been addressed in the concluding section of Chapter Three. With regard to the former, it was noted there that work such as Lewis's strongly indicates the continued experience of shame, albeit not necessarily overtly recognized. Furthermore, the fact that contemporary novelists continue to deal with matters pertaining to shame, even making its experience the theme of their work (cf Fine op cit), is sufficient to demonstrate that, in 'folk psychology' at least, shame is still a highly salient concept in 'our' society. A literary work (provided it is not explicitly concerned to present a historical or futuristic perspective) may be likened to a cultural dictionary, in that it reflects current popular preoccupations as well as usage of terminology. Thus, in "The Killjoy", a man's shame of his lifelong disfigurement is juxtaposed with the sexual shamelessness of the young girl with whom he becomes involved; each is testimony to the persistence of shame.

In addition, the idea that shame, induced by public shaming, has lost its potency and efficacy as a means of social control in our contemporary industrialized society,[9] due to the demise of communitarianism typical of previous eras, is convincingly countered by Braithwaite's argument that

> "the nature of interdependencies in modern urban social relations can actually increase rather than decrease our exposure to shame." (1993:2).

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[9]This is identified by Braithwaite as a claim frequently made by critics of his theory of reintegrative shaming as an effective means of crime control.

Thus, as was noted in Chapter Three, in traditional face to face communities, it is the 'whole person' who is shamed (which person, is, however,

> "accepted as good; it is just a part of their conduct which is disapproved as bad." [14]).

In urban social relations, however, due to the "proliferation of roles" (ibid), individuals no longer present themselves in such an integrated fashion to a single 'audience' (i.e. the community), but present different aspects of themselves to different audiences (15); thus,

> "... by partitioning audiences in a way that enables us to present radically different selves to those different audiences, our shame can be many-sided and more unmanageable in a role-segregated world."[10]

So far as the moral significance and value of shame is concerned, it is clear that this cannot be assessed so objectively. However, the claim of both Creighton (op cit) and Heller (op cit), i.e. that an over-reliance on either guilt or shame obstructs the optimal functioning of a society[11], and that some degree of balance between the two extremes (not however an equilibrium but an 'asymmetrical' emphasis) appears to have considerable validity.

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[10]Brandes (op cit:126-127) makes a related point in his discussion of the concentration in 'Mediterranean' anthropology on 'shame' in rural village communities rather than urban areas. Since enough research in the latter has not yet been undertaken to establish empirically that shame is more potent (or at least functions differently) in the former, it may be that Braithwaite's contention is correct.

[11]Presumably this argument also applies, by extension, to the optimal functioning of individuals (cf the psychoanalytical literature, e.g. Lewis op cit, on individual tendencies towards either shame or guilt).

The argument of certain guilt theorists (e.g. Lamb op cit), that shame cannot be considered moral because of its inherent lack of relationship to the concept of e.g. responsibility, is also too simplistic.[12] As identified by e.g. Nagel (1979) and Williams (1981) in their contributions on 'moral luck', opposing the idea of radical individual responsibility, there are things for which we are in a very real way appropriately blamed or praised, despite our lack of responsibility for them, which cannot be 'legislated away' (as Lamb, for example, tries to do). There is thus a conflict between the liberal ethic of Lamb and a conservative ethic which accepts the attribution of blame and consequent feeling of shame for such contingent facts.

As such, perhaps the greatest criticism of the argument (cf e.g. Schneider) that shame has a value and utility, in both social and ethical terms, beyond that which is recognized by many theorists, and that it should thus be encouraged rather than eliminated, is that the contemporary western 'liberal' interpretation of shame which predominates in the works of such theorists cannot accommodate the persistence of such illiberal interpretations of shame, which dictate shame for one's appearance, for one's social position etc.

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[12]It does, however, exemplify the way in which a culture emphasizes certain emotions which 'fit' with the prevailing ideology. Guilt is thus valued because its experience demonstrates that we are moral beings and capable responsible agents; by contrast, shame indicates deficiency, lack of autonomy and responsibility, which are disvalued. Thus, the individualist ideology of moral agency and accountability which characterizes contemporary 'western' society, sits ill with a concept such as shame which may be experienced for attributes etc. for which people cannot be held responsible.

The way towards resolution of such incompatibility, and in order to achieve a positive evaluation of shame which avoids its illiberal connotations, is not to deny the moral significance of shame but rather to re-think our notions of individualism, liberalism and responsibility themselves. For example, while the significance of the individual can still be retained, that concept must be broadened to allow for the recognition that such individuals have broader identities formed through attachments to others (cf e.g. Walsh 1970) and so as not to deny our 'radical sociality' (cf Schneider op cit). Attempts to rework such concepts are evident in the liberal-communitarian debate referred to above (see Chapter Three).

In conclusion, there seems little doubt that the predominant cultural valuation and emphasis <u>is</u> placed on guilt rather than shame (possibly for the sorts of reasons considered in Chapter Three and reiterated above), but this does not however imply that the latter is no longer significant. Rather, it appears that there is a discrepancy between the claims and stipulations of an intellectual 'elite' (particularly in philosophy and specifically in the field of ethical enquiry) and the empirical situation. Philosophical accounts of shame are thus primarily prescriptive rather than descriptive.

It now remains to consider what implications the data and conclusions of the present study of 'shame' have for its further investigation in the future. As such, the final Chapter will identify a number of potential research issues in this field of study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FUTURE OF SHAME RESEARCH

7.1 Interdisciplinary considerations

> "... access to the shame literature is not easy. Although there are many brilliant contributions, the field lacks coherence; it is scattered over many disciplines, with the contributors speaking virtually different languages." (Scheff 1990a:xvi).

As indicated in the Introduction, this dissertation itself constitutes a modest attempt to take not only a cross-cultural but also an interdisciplinary perspective on the concept and emotion of 'shame'. Chapter Six has demonstrated the variety of views explored, both within and between the disciplines of philosophy, anthropology, psychology and sociology.

As the quotation which opens this Chapter suggests, the question as to which research approach towards shame appears most 'promising', discussed in the previous chapter, raises the related question of just what the relationship should be between the different disciplines which concern themselves with this subject. However, the quotation not only accurately portrays the fragmentary nature which characterizes shame research but also epitomizes the situation prevailing in some other research areas. Thus, before focusing on the particular case of shame, some consideration will be made of the way in which the general problem, of how to reconcile the seemingly inevitable and natural intellectual division of labour and the concomitant tendency for disciplines to become 'ethnocentric', has been recognized and discussed by a number of authorities.

7.1.1 The intellectual division of labour and the "ethno-centrism of disciplines" (Campbell 1969)

Durkheim (1983:91-92) discusses the phenomenon of "intellectual individualism". Although made in the context of considering how multiple individual minds tend to be suited to studying different things and in different ways (presumably depending on, for example, interest or taste, competency etc.), his remarks on this subject are equally applicable to the wider situation in which the study of any given topic is 'parcelled out' between the various disciplines. However, even if disciplines implicitly recognize that

> "every object of knowledge offers an opportunity for an infinity of possible points of view"

and that

> "for every object of knowledge there are differing but equally justified ways of examining it" (ibid),

evidence of such recognition does not seem to be made explicit in much research (into shame in particular).

In addition, Lynd (op cit) has referred to the necessity of researchers in one field taking into consideration the data yielded by colleagues working in different fields, while acknowledging the impossibility of any one piece of research being able to investigate an object of enquiry expertly from many perspectives simultaneously. Moreover, she states that:

> "It has always been the function of philosophy to push questions beyond accepted barriers. In doing so it has always inevitably made use of what can be learned from more specialized fields of study." (1952:20).

It is questionable whether the second claim is as true of much contemporary philosophy as it may be of earlier.[1]

Campbell, identifying the "ethnocentrism of disciplines" in 1969, proposes a 'remedy' which is echoed in part by the recommendations of Scheff (1990a), intended to counteract what he describes as "the Balkanization of knowledge" (144). Each outlines a programme of reform both of the 'training' of individual intellects and of the academic institutions in which this occurs, which would encourage a more holistic approach to many research questions whilst still allowing for expert specialization.

7.1.2 Shame: philosophical and anthropological approaches

It may be objected that it is not only inevitable but also desirable that philosophers and anthropologists, for example, should 'speak different languages', since their concerns and purposes in considering shame are themselves different.
However, as indicated above, whilst it is indeed quite legitimate that different disciplines should study a phenomenon in differing ways (cf Wolfram 1982:268; Durkheim op cit), this is not to say that any one

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[1]In particular, the recent work of B. Williams (1993) on the concept of shame and other moral notions in the Ancient Greek world represents a significant exception. He does not employ the methods of cultural anthropology, and explicitly states this (op cit:2), preferring to leave this to certain other classicists. Moreover, he, like many philosophers, draws on literature rather than ethnography. Nonetheless, Williams is thus conscious of the relevance of material from outside the philosophical (and classical) disciplines and highly sensitive to the value of its use.

discipline can afford to ignore the findings of colleagues working in other fields.

Yet this is precisely what appears to be the case in much discourse on shame. As has already been suggested, it is any relationship between philosophical consideration of the logical features of concepts and empirical data which is most often lacking. Wolfram (op cit:267) states that it is not the philosopher's task to conduct empirical research into a concept but only to indicate where it is relevant.[2] Even if this is so, actual reference to existing empirical evidence is still relatively rare.

With respect to shame, many contemporary philosophical works ignore the increasing amount of ethnographic data collected by anthropologists over the past decade or two. Where reference to anthropology <u>is</u> made, it is most often to the now largely discredited distinctions between shame and guilt originally made by Mead and Benedict.[3]

It should, however, be stressed that responsibility for the relative lack of any serious communication between philosophy and anthropology where shame is concerned does not all rest on one side. There are a number of issues raised by the philosophical consideration of shame and brought out in this study which to date have not really been addressed by ethnographers in their research. For

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[2]In the light of the comments in the preceding subsection, on the inherent disadvantages of confining oneself to a single perspective on any topic, even this is debatable.

[3]There are of course exceptions, notably Heller (op cit) who cites Strathern (op cit) and Spiegelberg (1975:266) who refers to anthropology as "... a vast area of studies fascinating even for philosophers."

example, it is clear from the more metaphysical accounts considered in Chapter Five that ideas about shame are a potential locus for an entree into the mythology and ideology of a culture. Anthropologists, as has already been noted, have traditionally studied shame as social sanction, and in the sub-field of psychological anthropology have emphasized the characterization of shame as an emotion or a 'personality trait', in studies attempting to characterize whole cultures in terms of the prevalence of shame or guilt as an organizing affect. Some philosophers, by contrast, have taken a more cosmological and ethical view of shame and seen it as an important site of human views concerning humanity's 'place in the cosmos' and its relations with other inhabitants including animals and spirits. Thus, the concentration of earlier anthropology on the functions of 'shame' and more recent work in the context of emotions across cultures has excluded a potentially rich area of metaphysical and ethical enquiry. The philosophical accounts of shame suggest the variety and depth of questions to which anthropologists could be addressing themselves.[4]

Considering that social anthropology has its origins in philosophy (cf Jarvie [1968]), and that the kinds of questions about the nature of humanity with which philosophy has traditionally been concerned are what the empirical research of anthropology seeks to answer (in part at least), such a dialogue between the two disciplines would appear to be indispensable. As Spiegelberg notes:

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[4]Spiegelberg (op cit) does however note that a certain amount of "interdisciplinary bridge building" has begun to be initiated by anthropologists, whose interest in philosophical questions related to their research has been increasing.

> "... only a systematic and critical examination could answer such basic questions as those of man's essential structure, his distinctive features, his place in the universe, his dignity, and his destination. A mere empirical study of the varying patterns of culture, or even of cultural universals, could not yield the answers. Such questions require a philosophical approach." (op cit:267).

Whilst anthropologists might feel such a comment disparages their enterprise, it would appear that Spiegelberg's general point, that philosophical analysis and empirical research are necessarily complementary, is unobjectionable (cf Wolfram op cit:267). However, the specific relationship he proposes is one between phenomenology and anthropology, with the ultimate aim of their synthesis in a phenomenological anthropology (op cit:265-272). It is beyond the scope of the present study to elaborate on this; suffice it to suggest that claims for the relevance of phenomenological philosophy for anthropology (and also, particularly in the present context of 'shame' across cultures, of phenomenological psychology for the related field of cross-cultural psychology, [cf Macleod 1969]) deserve closer consideration.

7.2 Possible topics for further investigation

It is interdisciplinary considerations such as those discussed above, together with issues raised in the substantive chapters of this work, which suggest a number of potential research tasks in the field of 'shame' studies.

7.2.1 'Shame' and metaphysics in other cultures

As the remarks made in section 7.1.2suggest, a potentially fruitful area for both anthropological and philosophical research would appear to be that of the relationship between the conception of 'shame' and the metaphysical beliefs of inhabitants of other cultures, particularly non-literate ones.[5]

7.2.2 The 'ethnophenomenology' of 'shame' in other cultures

In the light of the comments above, and as was suggested in Chapter Six, the kind of phenomenological methodology utilized by Ablamowicz could possibly constitute a successful means of gaining access to the indigenous experience of 'shame' in other cultures. Thus, anthropological research into shame abroad may benefit from the explicit adoption of such an approach. This would hopefully yield richer and more detailed data with which to work in the task of providing, via 'reduction', an interpretation of an other-cultural experience of 'shame,'[6] from which starting point such questions as the extent of influence of sociocultural factors on such experiences could then proceed.

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[5]cf for example the work of Fajans (1983) on the Baining of Papua New Guinea. Also, Creighton, in her work on Japan (see Chapter Four above), demonstrates the significance of the broader metaphysical views of a culture and their influence on the concept of shame.

[6]This is not intended to imply that 'interpretive' anthropologists do not already, to a large extent, employ similar methods in their fieldwork. It is only to suggest that a more rigorous and explicit employment and discussion of phenomenological methodology may prove advantageous.

7.2.3 An ethnography of Anglo/American shame.

It has been suggested that ideas about, and the experience of, shame in 'our' culture, possibly vary between different sub-groups in society. Thus, detailed comparative empirical research into the concept of shame 'at home' (cf Jackson 1987; Marcus & Fischer op cit), with particular attention being paid to such potential variations and again, possibly drawing on some sort of phenomenological methodology, could constitute another area in which significant advances in the understanding of this field may be made. Moreover, bearing in mind the comments of Brandes (op cit:125-127) that there has been a tendency (particularly in the context of Mediterranean anthropology) to assume that shame is a moral concept more characteristic of rural communities than urban, which has led to a neglect of the possible manifestations of shame in this context, some effort could be made to redress the balance and therefore concentrate on these areas.[7]

7.2.4 Shame and the Buddhist doctrine of 'anatta'

Given the article of faith in the research literature that shame is a concept inextricably bound to the self-concept, it would be interesting to explore whether or not 'shame' in Buddhist cultures provides a possible counter-example. The doctrine of anatta or 'no-self' enshrined in Buddhist scripture (and extensively discussed by e.g. Collins 1982), whilst arguably prescriptive rather than descriptive, calls into question the nature of a concept/emotion such as 'shame' where the idea of an individual 'self'

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[7]cf Braithwaite (1993), on the continuing significant role of shame and shaming in modern industrialized gesellschaft communities.

is, ideally at least, absent (cf Obeyesekere [op cit]).[8] It may be that the 'western' self-concept is a product of our particular language game (Harre 1985:261-263; Obeyesekere op cit:246-248) and that

> "... one can have 'reflexive emotions' that are not necessarily tied to ideas of the self, or at least that could be distinguished from self notions." (ibid:247),

such as shame (and guilt). Such a possibility deserves investigation and perhaps research of the kind described above would be a useful starting point.

7.3 Conclusion

Notwithstanding the remarks made in the first part of this Chapter, on the actual and potential relationship between various disciplines concerned with the study of shame, in the end it must be recognized that a conflict of perspectives and frameworks on any topic is inevitable (and indeed desirable). As Durkheim points out, this is due to the nature of knowledge, which is itself organic. Thus, to expect the elimination of conflict and the achievement of consensus is unrealistic, not least because reality is both rich and complex (op cit:92) and each approach to a particular subject reflects an aspect of that reality.

Despite this inevitability of conflict, it is hoped that what this study has demonstrated is that to frame the discussion as to the constitution of emotions in general, and shame in particular, in terms

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[8]Of course, the first step in any such research would have to be an exploration of the extent of the influence of such a doctrine on the actual empirical experience of persons, i.e., an ethnopsychological and possibly phenomenological account of the indigenous self-concept (if any) of the culture under consideration.

of a contrast between an absolute, 'essentialist' view on the one hand and an extreme relativist, 'constructionist' view on the other, is unhelpful. The recurrent similarities between western shame and 'shame' elsewhere, illuminated by this study, cannot be denied, despite the equally evident differences. However, their co-existence cannot be accommodated by either of the above positions; hence the need for alternative models and approaches such as those identified, examined and evaluated in this study. Thus, the agenda for the cross-cultural study of emotions must move on and away from both these extremes towards a more 'concessive relativism', within which there is still plenty of scope for healthy debate.

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